Magister-Auctor Saga

Enlightened Citizens School

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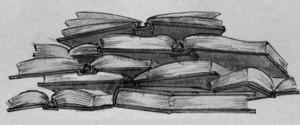


Enlightened Citizens School

Sayeri Quispe Zainabu Chebol

To Manuel, Sebastião
and Olívia

The normalisation of school

Second half of the hundred and eighteenth hectoyear. The nineteenth century, as it was called before the Reconstruction when the Christian world assumed that everyone celebrated the birth of Christ as *point one*. Before the European Renaissance, points zero were the devil's influence.
Queen Louise-Marie recently died in Oostende. Leopold became a widower for the second time. The eldest of the three children was just under 15, his brother Philippe 13, and little Charlotte had just celebrated her tenth birthday.

The habitants of Oostende watched the queen's funeral with a subdued air. But no one could dwell for long on the deceased from high society. They are attentively watching the changes taking place on the former military sea wall. One of the octagonal protrusions serves as the foundation for a wooden Kursaal, intended to accommodate the ever-growing number of holidaymakers, wealthy citizens, and aristocrats.
In late summer young people often talk about it with red ears *Le Paradis*. By this they mean a cordoned-off section of the beach on the border between Oostende and Mariakerke. Nude bathing is permitted there with a doctor's prescription. Primarily men use the beach and the rumours circulating will soon lead to a ban on nude bathing. History repeats itself. Just as when Jan and Madeleine and their friends saw the first bathers arrive a hundred years ago, warnings are now being issued from the pulpit about the far-reaching decline in morals. [See *The Privilege of Knowing*].

The scientific world is increasingly coming to the forefront. Those with economic and industrial interests have long understood that this is where the future lies, no longer in managing the divine goods of the earth, as was the case until about a hundred years ago. And

even for the management of the land and the earth, the help of science is now sought, no longer from magicians and seers. The Brussels Observatory is now a true meteorological institute. Data is collected from observers throughout the region. This allows for better interpretation of the weather, and thus also for better anticipation of threats to agriculture.
Gradually, the observatories are being equipped further. Meridian telescopes are making star observations ever more precise. These observations cause the Earth and the Sun to recede further and further from the center of the universe. Balloons are being used extensively. Perhaps it's no coincidence that the first story by the 23-year-old Jules Verne is titled *Un drame dans les airs. Un voyage en ballon.* Shortly after this, his first book follows: *Un drame au Mexique. Les premiers navires de la marine mexicaine*. The tone was immediately set. Throughout his work over the next fifty years, Jules Verne would consistently highlight various scientific discoveries and even predict developments.

In Moresnet Johanna Lemaître is not only '*Fröbelian'* but also *primary school teacher.* She is now 33 years old and has expanded her school activities. In the small school in the adapted barn, she supervises just over thirty children. She receives daily help from her revolutionary neighbour Carine [See *Enslaved by Power*]. She brings with her both her own children, as well as little Annie Dehaan, who has been living in Moresnet since last year. Her father is a widower. A firedamp explosion in northern France caused a fire in the mining district where his family lived, and Annie's mother died. Annie's father no longer wanted to work underground and moved to Moresnet when he learned that the *Vieille-Montagne* was hiring experienced people.
Johanna's group of children is known in the area as the *Republican Children's Society.* Johanna claims that she is continuing the work of her great-grandparents and grandparents. The *Society* is not an

imitation of the adult world, as was the case in David Manson's Irish school when he established a form of the States-General in the form of games to frame his special form of mutual education. It does, however, adopt the idea of working pairs from Martha MacThiers. Naturally, she pays a great deal of attention to free work, as formulated by her teacher Fröbel. She extends that concept as far she can to include intellectual work in the free work, encouraging the children to explore on their own. Afterwards, they speak and, if they are able, write about their experiences, guided by Carine or Johanna.

Although her approach differs significantly from that of the Kelmis municipal school, which is funded by the Vieille-Montagne Company, Johanna maintains good relationships with her fellow teachers. This allows her to purchase on more affordable prices paper, ink, and pens, as well as school furniture and math materials. She continues to try to interest her colleagues in Fröbel's teaching materials.

Johanna appreciates the financiers' decision to hire at least one fully qualified teacher. She doesn't always agree with his teaching approach, but he does consider her an equal. Ultimately, she's a false *teacher*, through self-study. In a sense, her only real education is limited to her stay in the Kindergärten in Langethal [See *Enslaved by Power*].

One evening, Johanna and her colleague are talking about what Johanna read in a teacher's magazine.

"It's increasingly being written it is apparently no longer acceptable to have untrained teachers in the classroom. I can agree with that. But I don't agree that someone without vocational training is equated with an illiterate person," she says.

Her colleague replies: "I've certainly never considered you illiterate. Quite the opposite. I think your knowledge extends beyond what some of my colleagues and I ever acquired as students. But if I'm not mistaken, the government of our neighbouring country,

Belgium, wants teachers in small towns and villages to be more involved in public education in general, and therefore also develop literacy activities with adults. The school library can also be a municipal library. They are sometimes also asked to read aloud to adults or give presentations."

"At least that's what you read in the liberal magazines and newspapers," Henri joins the conversation.

"Yes," Johanna's colleague answers with a laugh. "Do you have to hear this gem?" He takes a copy of the *De Leerschool, tijdschrift voor kwekelingen (Dutch The Learning School, magazine for students)* in hand and reads: '*That the education of a day labourer in one of the most remote villages in the country need not be the same as that given to the children of a craftsman in some trading town… Pupils in a school in a trading town are made to sign; write accounts, receipts, promissory notes, bills of exchange, etc.… In a peat colony, it is necessary that pupils be thoroughly familiar with the origin of peat and turf, that they frequently make calculations involving the purchase and sale of this commodity; that they become familiar with places where peat is also found.*'."

"That must be the vision of doctrinaire liberals and conservative rulers," says Johanna. "I know that as early as 1842, there was a desire to establish national teacher training colleges alongside provincial and episcopal teacher Normal Schools. Although they advocated for a uniform training program for a mission in state-run primary schools that should not be subject to church influence, there was considerable pressure from the conservative church leadership. Consider the words of Monsignor Cornelis Van Bommel, which, as far as I know, still serve as a reference for other bishops and church leaders in Belgium. He said for instance that he see *Brothers of the Christian Schools* as a model. So, La Salle's rules for silencing children are the rules for the ideal teacher. Naturally, according to this church father, lay teachers should follow these rules as much as possible, and above all, know and practice

Christian doctrine. And while teachers should also have a good secular knowledge, less stringent demands could be placed on those working in rural areas. Your first comment about the teacher as a popular educator probably doesn't come from that conservative perspective!

Carine joins the conversation: "In any case, the conservatives resist as soon as more general education is discussed. Belgian minister Rogier can't really get his proposal regarding secondary education off the ground. Since 1850, he's been proposing state secondary education, inviting the clergy to religious instruction without it being incorporated into the curriculum. This would, after all, imply a requirement for one specific religion, while there's officially no state religion. This alone ensures that state-run secondary education remains practically a dead letter. Interest in the royal athenaeums and the secondary schools of the state, the province, or the municipality remains low. And that's only talking about state education for boys. Conservative Catholics don't have to worry about upper-class girls for the time being. They may attend school, but only in Catholic institutions for girls run by sister congregations. The high tuition automatically keeps poor girls away."

The friends in Moresnet naturally often talk about the situation in Belgium and the Netherlands. What they hear from other countries on the European continent doesn't differ much from what they hear from neighbouring countries.

In Victorian Britain, for example, even the words of Samuel Smiles of strict Calvinist descent, were viewed with suspicion. This former surgeon decided to take up writing and became politically active after his years as publisher of the *Leeds Times*. He contributes to legislation concerning public health and national education. He is convinced that the children's environments have a major influence on their education in later years. Regarding education, he says with the words of Mills: *'It is about helping towards doing without help*'. By

this he means that teachers should teach the working population how to become less dependent on charity or poor relief institutions. But the upper classes assume that the lower classes occupy that position precisely because of less intellect and see no benefit in something like *Leeds Mutual Improvement Society*. For many, these kinds of organisations go too far, although there are also those who say, for example: 'It is claimed that education will give the working class aspirations to rise above their current position and endanger the institutions now established among us and considered 'glorious'. Welcome all such aspirations! Welcome the education that will make people respect themselves and aspire to higher privileges and greater freedoms than they now enjoy! Welcome all means that will introduce and elevate the masses into the full community of citizenship —regardless of whose comforts are disturbed by the change..'

In the Netherlands there is a similar association. Since the time of the Batavian Republic *De Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen (The Society for the Overall Public Benefit* abbreviated *Tot Nut*) plays an important role in public education. The association establishes public libraries among other things. The local branches currently manage more than 240 lending libraries. The collections must, of course, meet selection criteria: the publications emphasise the moral virtues of diligence in work and self-help.

Meanwhile, the rising Portuguese liberals hope for rapid literacy in a population that is almost completely illiterate, and yet resistance is also strong here. A plan for mobile schools is being developed. The *High Council for Public Instruction* states in her report for 1847-1848 that this was a frugal plan to spread education in rural parishes. As in Sweden, a corps of itinerant teachers could be created to teach in each parish for a certain period: '*Despite the existence of other more productive means, perhaps this method could be tested among us'* the High Council stated. This was the response to Minister Rodrigo Magalhães' attempt, which stipulated in Article 3

of the 1835 school reform to provide all municipalities with a school using the Lancaster or simultaneous method as a general method, with as many improvements as possible. This was according to the conservatives the overly expensive solution. A few years later, Article 22 of the Passos Manuel reform stipulated: '*If the chosen method cannot take place due to a lack of enough students, or for any other reason, the method of simultaneous teaching remains'*. This is an attempt to refute the argument for not establishing a school in a particular rural area if there are not enough pupils available.
That doesn't work, and therefore the Swedish model is promoted as a cost-saving measure. However, this exacerbates another problem. The lamentable discipline in mobile and even permanent schools often leads teachers to exaggerate when spanking a student. The regulations of December 20, 1850, refer in paragraph 33 to the punishments to be administered: scolding, sitting at the back, and remaining standing. Corporal punishment should only be used as a last resort and must '*be used paternally, avoiding offending shame or harming health*'.

Carine is very angry about what she reads in a copy of the Ghent Sunday newspaper *Vaderland.* It states that Flemish literature is in a bad behaving and that this is a consequence of the French Revolution. The newspaper writes: '*Indeed, during the Reign of Terror at the end of the last century, as well as during the tyranny of Napoleon I, the influence of the French language was immense. The men of 'la belle et généreuse (!) France', who wanted to turn our Flemish ancestors into little French men, eradicated the Flemish language wherever they could and forcibly imposed their French in all kinds of administrations, education, and so on. It goes without saying that Flemish literature, which already had little significance, was deeply affected by all this, and finally, as if vanquished, made way for the language of "chez nous".*' She claims that it is primarily the will of Flemish and Brabant

aristocracy French is suppressing Flemish. According to her, the revolutionary French upsurge was primarily related to the desire for a universal scientific language that could replace Latin, and for the enlightened minds of France, this could only be French. Chauvinistic, certainly, but it has nothing to do with literature, she concludes.

Johanna and Henri agree with Carine that it is very often the French-speaking elite that puts a spoke in the wheel when it comes to Dutch-language education. This was evident during the years of the *United Kingdom of the Netherlands.* But whatever the case, the French certainly cherished the hope of making their language a world language and thus increasing French hegemony. In this respect, they could be compared to Spanish, Portuguese, English, Chinese, and Arab rulers.

Meanwhile, the former members of the *Association Démocratique* who have ended up in Moresnet try to evaluate the developments in France since Louis Philippe was deposed. For Carine and her family, it is about a return to the *real values* of the republic, with a greater awareness of the workers. They cite the description of the February events of 1848 made by Karl Marx, Gustave Flaubert, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Victor Hugo. Their friends say they also read at the time *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung*. But you can only conclude that the hoped-for strengthening of socialist ideas was quickly quashed by an attentive Louis Napoleon, who bears all the hallmarks of his uncle. After all, he quickly sought to become president of that new republic. And it is already clear that this second republic will be succeeded by a second empire. It's hard to interpret recent events as anything other than another coup d'état by those who had already seized power. Besides, Marx is in London, Hugo is in Brussels, Flaubert is traveling somewhere in Egypt, and Tocqueville is probably still in Vincennes prison. No, that second republic is definitely finished, and once again, the members of the upper class have simply seized power from one another.

Johanna follows the events in the world of teachers and '*Fröbelians'*.

She learns that the *Société Centrale des Instituteurs (Central Society of Schoolteachers)* which saw the light of the day about ten years ago is not in good shape. Initially the *Society* had received support, particularly from city authorities, as a result of the Belgian government's more liberal orientation. Concerns at the time were that there would be a greater focus on simultaneous and mutual education, and that the demonstrative method, which had proven its value with small groups of students, would be increasingly abandoned. In 1841, the chairman of the *Society* during her conference the goal was '*to improve primary education, to propagate good methods, to make known the different teaching processes, to excite the zeal of teachers and to make the views and means of each member of the meeting contribute to the general well-being*'. Even then somewhat non-committal…

With the comeback of a conservative government, things went even worse. Minister Nothomb refused to chair the congress, and meanwhile, regulations in Brussels decided that, from 1844 onward, the teaching method would be Pestalozzi's simultaneous education. Mutual education would only be possible in schools where it was already in use before 1844. Naturally, this referred to the Lancaster School which, incidentally, was not a public school. The city council readily acceded to the request of the chairman of the congress of the *Society for the Encouragement and Support of Mutual Education* to open that school in the working-class parish of the *Marolles*. The reasoning seemed to be that a poor, non-public school for the poor was better than no school at all. Johanna is inclined to agree with Carine that this, once again, was a conscious decision to provide the children of ordinary people with a lesser quality education than those of the more privileged groups.

Yet, today, teachers and their representatives disapprove of certain actions by wealthy families. Johanna reads in a pedagogical journal

from 1850 that it is the duty of teachers to warn parents not to criticise other children for their clothing or appearance. The custom, inherited from aristocratic circles, of introducing children to the adult world at a young age with pomp and circumstance at great society balls is also considered not pedagogical.

In the summer of 1852, news arrives from Prussia. Karl Fröbel reports that the Women's College was not doing well. Already a year after its opening, tensions arose between him and his uncle Friedrich, who quickly withdrew. Karl writes that Uncle Friedrich had passed away in the meantime, which comes quite as a shock to Johanna.

Karl also talks about how he and his wife increasingly came into conflict with Hamburg's school policy. Karl is now *persona non grata* in the Prussian educational system, and the couple has since left the university. There are talks of closing the entire school. Karl announces that he and his wife Johanna are moving to Edinburgh, where he can take over the management of a girls' school.

Now that the Belgian government wants to further develop and differentiate education based on vocational training, director Adolphe Quetelet director of the Observatory proposes to establish a network of agro-meteorological observations in Belgian agricultural schools. In the *International Conference on Maritime Meteorological Observations* Adolphe Quetelet is a well-known and respected name both at home and abroad after having taken place in Brussels in September 1853 at the initiative of the American Matthew Fontaine Maury. The conference participants came from Belgium, Denmark, the United States, France, Great Britain, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, and Sweden. Shortly after the conference, reports were published, in both French and English, demonstrating that conducting meteorological observations at sea leads to shorter sea voyages. The conference made this abundantly clear. What can be beneficial for sea voyages can also be beneficial for agriculture, the meteorologists argued. Therefore,

classical climatological observations were to be conducted daily at agricultural colleges in Verviers, not far from Kelmis, as well as in Torhout near Oostende and in Tienen. This promising practice was soon discontinued, officially arguing that the work took up too much of the school's time. Johanna believes another reason might be that they don't want future farmers to do too much scientific work. The abolition of some of these schools and the reform of others in 1855 strengthens her opinion.

One of Johanna's colleagues brings her an article from a pedagogical journal about a phonics reading method developed by António Castilho for the Portuguese language, hence the name Método Castilho. The method is based on a picture book and is apparently derided by schoolteachers. In the article, Johanna reads that, among other things, the *High Council for Public Instruction* is very critical of this method. They don't immediately write it off, but say that '*The initial information is not very favourable for that method.'* It is rarely used and needs further testing, according to the *High Council*, although, the text continues '*the Council will greatly appreciate that, if the advantages of convenience, conciseness and perfection which his method promises are realised, the immense fame it deserves will be reserved for the eminent philologist A.F. Castilho'*. Furthermore, the High Council does not fail to criticise Commissioner Castilho, who allegedly tries to enforce the use of his method to the detriment of other methods. The *High Council* states that even if the results are good, they should be recommended, not imposed. That was in 1853. We are now two years later, says the article and the *High Council* is more explicit in its criticism of what was initially wrongly called the rapid method and its use. The results from various parts of the country indicate that the method should be convicted, it is said. Yet, the High Council dares '*not to form a full and certain judgment and does not deny that more time is needed'*. This refers for instance to the schoolmaster's habit of

preferring to use old procedures and their reluctance to embrace any innovation. But what seems to be most important is the aversion to the rashness of imposing this method at the expense of all other forms of reading instruction.
The article concludes with a short, positive report. The story comes from a municipality in inland Portugal, Viana de Alentejo '*On July 24, 1853, the village's Primary School was inaugurated in its own building, equipped with the necessary materials to put Castilho's rapid reading method into practice. A large gathering of women and men from this village and neighbouring villages filled the building. The band "Os Curiosos" played at the entrance. The children occupied the desks. Accompanied by musical instruments, they sang the invocation to God and to Castilho whose portrait hung on one of the classroom walls. Several speeches followed, and teacher João António Martim Morom explained the Castilho system and its benefits in a rather long but engaging speech. This section concluded with the children singing the anthem of industry, accompanied by music. According to the administrator, children aged five and six, who knew nothing "had already perfectly mastered the 22 letters and their various values in the short space of five days and four lessons".'* Johanna sees in this report additional arguments for replacing tedious lessons based on spelling with the meaningful introduction of words and texts, as can be achieved with picture books and readers. It's time, she thinks, to refresh memories regarding the children's encyclopaedias that Comenius distributed two hundred years ago.

Henri's local pub is for the old friends since the days of the *Association Démocratique* what Johanna's Kindergarten-barn is for the schoolmasters and those interested in mathetics and didactics.
During a bar conversation, Henri learns that the Marx family isn't doing so well in London. Karl spends almost all his time studying in London libraries, and Jenny complains that often there's not enough money to properly feed and clothe the family. Moreover, almost

everyone views the philosopher with suspicion. After all he's known for ideas that, according to the upper classes, lean too closely to socialism to be acceptable. In the United Kingdom of Queen Victoria, the middle-class prejudices against the character and behaviour of the manual labourers are even embodied in civil law. Public administration practices regarding the economic and financial activities of the working class create deliberate biases against their interests at the instigation of Parliament and the courts. Just look at the treatment of initiatives like the *Leeds Mutual Improvement Society*. It seems very likely that the wealthy want to contain the working class at all costs to make its social mobility and influence in the country's government, legislation, and society impossible.

In 1853, a war broke out in the Black Sea region, which Henri and his bar-mates follow through newspaper reports and other news reaching Moresnet. When Tsar Nicholas I of Russia declared war against the Ottoman Empire in October, people in the pub predicted yet another redrawing of the European map. Speculation rage as to whether it is a religious or economic war. The newspapers suggest that Tsar Nicholas wanted to protect the Orthodox Church and therefore wanted to take Constantinople, which he considered the cradle of that Church, under his control. But Constantinople also happens to be the gateway to Black Sea shipping…

A few months later Le Parisien [See *Living in the margins* in *Enslaved by Power*] tells the French Emperor made an alliance with the English Crown and together they declared war on Russia.

"It's quite obvious here that economic interests are at stake. Both Napoleon III, who was sympathetic to Ferdinand de Lesseps' plans to build a canal in the Suez isthmus, and the British Crown who wants to protect its shipping routes to its colonies, prefer to see the Ottoman Emperor as an ally rather than an adversary," the Parisian explains.

“That war might not last long,” the innkeeper thinks. “If I’m right, the Tsar is more or less alone now.”
However, it took two years before the alliance in Paris concluded a peace agreement with the son of the now deceased Tsar Nicholas.
Gradually, stories spread about poor hygienic conditions in the various armies involved.
“That three-year war may have killed more soldiers with disease than with bullets,” remarks one of Henri’s friends.
“You could certainly call the siege of Sevastopol a massacre where disease defeated soldiers,” says Henri. “I’ve read testimonies in the English newspapers from two nurses, Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale, showing that the conditions for both unwounded and wounded soldiers were appalling.”
“That’s right,” says the innkeeper. According to a war correspondent from *The Times* less romantic than Roger Fenton, four out of five soldiers would have died of disease or infection and not from the bullet.”
“Just an observation,” another bartender remarks, “that Fenton was appointed by the British government for his photographic skills. He was commissioned to show a less horrific image of the war.”
“If that is true, then it is yet another fine example of the hypocrisy of those in power,” the innkeeper believes.
“But, mind you, history will remember the war ended thanks to the heroic men of the French army who stormed Fort Malachov,” says Henri. “And meanwhile, no one will be talking about the fact that thousands of people were murdered once again by heads of state who only cared about their political and economic interests.”

A few months later, Johanna and Henri are visiting Carine and her husband in the neighbourhood. Henri recalls the café conversation about the history of the heroes and says: “Last week, during my visit to Liège, I found a collection of issues of the Ghent Sunday paper *Vaderland*. An issue from 1849 contains an article

about Hendrik Conscience."
Carine and Johanna look at him and Carine asks: "Conscience the soldier, Conscience the teacher or Conscience the writer?"
Henri replies that he didn't know Conscience had been a teacher and continues: "It was about the author. The city of Ghent wanted to honour him for his book on Jacob Van Artevelde and the tribute he paid to the city, with a thank message written on parchment. It's quite funny, because it's mainly about the use of the Dutch language. I copied the piece; listen: 'The Education and Fine Arts Committee of the City Council of this city has proposed that the letter to be written to Mr. Conscience in recognition of the tribute paid to the city by his work, Jacob van Artevelde, be accompanied by a parchment letter expressing the Council's deep appreciation for this tribute. The committee is assured that this document, signed by all the Council members, will be more pleasing to Mr. Conscience than any monetary reward or commemorative medal that could be awarded to him. This proposal was adopted with acclaim. The only remaining request is that this expression of gratitude be written in Artevelde's language, not that of his arch-enemies." The arch enemy is of course all those who speak French."
"I have not read *Jacob Van Artevelde*," says Carine's husband, "but I did read *the Lion of Flanders.* And I have a strong opinion about that book. It was, of course, written shortly after the founding of Belgium, and it seems to me the kind of book to provide a history of a nation that, until then, wasn't a nation. The French authors who glorify Napoleon did the same. The Portuguese and the Spanish have their own historiography of the nation, older than ours because they've had virtually fixed borders for much longer, if we ignore the territories occupied by their royal families in other parts of the world. And so, here we have a kind of Belgian story, but the heroes are sometimes French-speaking and sometimes Dutch-speaking, or at least speak Flemish dialects. Moreover, the border agreements remain the result of bickering kings and heads of state

who need them. It seems to me the kind of Belgian story in which the linguistic disputes have as much to do with class differences as with the geographical composition of the buffer zone that people have been trying to create since 1815."
"So you're essentially saying that Conscience is working on some kind of impossible task, to simultaneously promote the value of Dutch and create the Belgian nation?" asks Johanna. "Hmm. And would he do that consciously or unconsciously? He may well have been an opponent of the House of Orange, given that he signed up for the Belgian army in 1830 as an eighteen-year-old young man. He was a teacher there, Henri, in the regimental school. When he left the army six years later and started writing, he understood that Flemish-mindedness was an unappreciated quality at the administrative level. Meanwhile, at the request of the Belgian king, he also served as honorary Dutch teacher to the royal princes."
"And today he's more or less unemployed," Carine interjects. Then she laughs. "It's a pity our innkeeper friend doesn't speak Dutch. Otherwise we could give him his copy of *Boss Gansendonck*."
Henri laughs too and replies: "That's naughty of you, Carine. Besides, our innkeeper isn't a Gansendonck at all. But now I'm thinking of a clerk from *Vieille-Montagne* making the perfect match. And he certainly doesn't read Dutch…"

"Henri, have you heard of the English scientist? "Charles Darwin?" asks the Parisian.
"Yes, he studies rocks and stones almost everywhere in the world and has contributed significantly to geology. I recently spoke about him with one of the mine managers who is interested in that science. He claims that by mastering geology, he will more easily find new places where he can mine zinc spar. And he mentioned some of Darwin's publications related to rock research."
"Did you know that during the first part of his world trip, which he completed twenty years ago, he spent a lot of time with three

inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego? The captain of the boat he was traveling on had, in a sense, kidnapped them during a previous trip. They call themselves *Yaghan* while the English call them Fuegians. It is said that the long time Charles Darwin spent with them on the boat enabled him. As soon as he saw other *Yaghan* who had never been to England he came to the conclusion that different groups of people display the same emotions and have the same mental capacity for learning. This led him to conclude that there is only one human species. At the time, he did claim that the locals who had never been to England were primitive. Later, he apparently spent years studying the Yaghan language and culture partly with the help of a kind of Yaghan dictionary. This increased his knowledge of the Yaghan people which he now-a-days appreciates more. He recently wrote that he believes European colonisation will certainly lead to the extinction of other population groups. But this might be the natural evolution of human history, just as he observes a natural evolution in the history of rocks and animals whose skeletons or imprints are found in places other than their current habitat, or of which no living specimens have been found, or no longer exist."

"Did the English establish Lancaster schools in Tierra del Fuego?" asks Henri.

"Not to my knowledge," the Parisian replies. "Why do you ask?"

"Because Johanna just told me she read an article in a Dutch educational journal where the authors say this system is good for primitives who don't have the same level of civilisation as the Dutch," Henri laughs. "It literally said: '*The Bell and Lancaster teaching method is a product of necessity and will always remain so. A dark shadow must fall on the country where Lancaster schools are necessary.'* It is assumed that this system is not intended to teach Dutch children everything they need to know, but rather to teach primitive nations, such as the Russians."

"Perhaps the Russians aren't very happy with those kinds of

comments," the Parisian thinks. "I don't know about the Yaghan, of course."

Johanna is unable to comment on whether the Belgian nation is a primitive nation or not. She does know that considerable funds are being spent on establishing a general teacher training program, and that this benefits the schools. In return, the state requires all graduates, including those from episcopal institutions, to commit to teaching in public schools for five years. This is not appreciated by the church, which has its own schools. Johanna hears this discussed at the *Bienfaisance (Charity)* congress. At that international meeting attended a delegation from *tot Nut (Society for the Overall Public Benefit)* from the Netherlands, which is a great support for developing more and better relations across the borders of the Dutch-speaking states.

Kelmis Moresnet is now almost at its fiftieth anniversary. What began as a dispute among surveyors and quickly developed an economic background now persists in the form of a micro-land of 330 hectares, which is still being squabbled over, hence its continued name of Neutral Moresnet. The Napoleonic Code continues to provide the legal framework, the French franc is the prevailing currency, and in reality, power lies less with the commissioners or the mayor and more with the *Vieille-Montagne Society*. The society provides decent offices for the municipality, and it appears that a director could even become mayor, while the position of duty constable is often filled by a former mine supervisor.

As its fiftieth anniversary approaches, the municipality has nearly 3,000 inhabitants. That's a tenfold increase in population. About half work for *Vieille-Montagne*. For the rest, the absence of taxes attracts other immigrants, while it's still possible to avoid military service by moving here. But that's coming to an end. Soon, the exemption will only apply to boys born in Moresnet.

As said, *Vieille-Montagne* remains the mainstay of work, entertainment, and primary education for the working population. This is not so much a strategy like that of, for example, the *Working Men's College* in Camden. This institution founded by Christian socialists represents quite well the liberal educational philosophy of providing working people with better education. John Ruskin contributed to this [See below: *The battle for the school*] although he doesn't entirely agree with the founders' ideas. His participation has resulted in some good drawing manuals. Furthermore, the *Working Men's College* for the training of assistants.

No, *Vieille-Montagne* provides for the workers' free time and for the education of their children. And this education bears the characteristics of work, apprenticeship, or factory schools. As elsewhere, the children receive only basic schooling, learning to read, write, and do arithmetic. Religious education is often part of the curriculum. This is the case in Catholic Belgium, where, according to Johanna's information, nearly 45,000 pupils were enrolled this year in more than 950 schools with a limited curriculum. This is not unusual today. In the Netherlands, the guidelines are laid down in the law of 1806, and in Belgium in the law of 1842: religion and morality, reading, writing, the legal system of weights and measures, arithmetic, and the mother tongue. Johanna sees how little has changed since the time of her grandparents, before the French Revolution. Moral education is more important than schooling. Conservative pedagogical journals clearly state that religion remains the guiding principle, and that working-class children should not be taught too much. The ruling class agrees on this, whether liberal or Catholic.

There are also exceptions, Johanna thinks. This summer of 1857, schoolteacher Van Nerum was celebrated with a banquet for his 25 years as head teacher at Ghent City School No. 1. Interestingly, in October, a meeting of 100 former pupils followed after a call to jointly establish a society having the aim of *'provisioning study books*

to deserving students of municipal schools so that they can continue their studies in higher education institutions' Ninety attendees immediately sign up.

From her local colleagues, Johanna hears how teachers in neighbouring countries are gradually organising. In the Netherlands, they are this year pushing through a new education law that significantly increases salaries. Although tutoring still provides the much-needed supplementary salary, most teachers no longer feel compelled to take on the additional jobs of sexton or gravedigger.

What certainly addresses the need for better education is the requirement from various educational societies to guarantee their members one or two free evenings per month to attend a lecture or book review. Johanna regularly reads transcripts of these book reviews in one or another pedagogical journal. She is enthusiastic when she sees how many books in French, German, or English are reviewed and how her colleagues generally speak three or more languages. The journals she most appreciates usually cite German pedagogues and scholars, but Rousseau and his followers also receive attention. Yet, Pestalozzi, with his peculiar ideas about happy poor, remains a much-discussed author, while much less information is available about Fröbel.

"I'm concerned about the way our institutional colleagues talk about the children," Johanna begins.

"What do you mean by institutional colleagues?" asks Carine.

"The teachers with a diploma who teach in a municipal school or a state school," Johanna answers.

"So, most teachers in many European countries right now," Carine agrees. "And what do they say about the children?"

"At first glance, the comments seem sensible. For example, I read in a five-year-old magazine: '*If we pay attention to the signs of our times, we notice a strong trend towards materialism; a sharp increase in*

pauperism, a sharp division between classes in civil life.' That aligns with what we ourselves observe. Despite the Enlightenment, despite the revolutions, the poor do seem to be poorer and the rich richer," Johanna continues.

Carine says: "So far, that seems to me to be a healthy view of an unhealthy situation."

Johanna answers. "Yes, but follows worries me. For example, I read: '*The elementary schools in a commercial town, a factory town, a small town, a village where agriculture is the main livelihood, or where fishing and shipping must provide for the needs of almost everyone, will all present different needs…*' That's clear. And then it comes. People adapt when it comes to poor people. It's said: '*You, who taught the children of both nobles and commoners to read, tell us, were not circumstances forcing you to change? Was not the whole environment of the children so different, so diverse, that you, perhaps involuntarily and without suspecting it, followed a completely different path?'* It seems very likely to me that Pestalozzi, Lasalle, and Démia are speaking. The Enlightenment of the Rich is still the foundation upon which common knowledge is adapted for the poor."

Carine responds: "So my husband and I are right after all that it would be better to just wipe all the rich off the face of the earth. Then we can truly start with a clean slate."

Johanna smiles and says, "Wasn't the search for a pure new beginning precisely what led to the years of terror at the end of the last century? I was thinking more of my ancestors' attempts to bring together children of different backgrounds and have them work together, instead of separating them based on their level of knowledge and status and instructing them simultaneously, as is apparently the prevailing practice everywhere now."

Carine asks: "So that simultaneous work, or instruction as you like to say, is class-perpetuating? Regarding our friend Karl Marx of the then *Association Démocratique*, the workers must unite everywhere to obtain simultaneous, class-breaking education?"

Johanna answers: “Uniting is fine, but not to demand simultaneous instruction. Nor is it simply about cross-class instruction. Adapted mental arithmetic with assignments that vary depending on the classes in which they work doesn’t seem like a logical way to lead more boys and girls to secondary education. Will they learn more that way, and what will improve their work environment? Last year, two teachers in Valburg and Herveld published an arithmetic booklet in which all the sums are about farming. That’s not the solution for me. To give children the opportunity to acquire all the basic knowledge and also to keep them in school longer, you naturally have to be able to engage them. This happens by getting them to talk to each other and view the world together from different perspectives. This doesn’t happen by creating classes solely for farm children with farming problems, classes solely for factory children with wage issues, and classes solely for children from the upper middle class with papers on financial management.”

“And that’s why you want them to work together?”

“Yes, I want that, but I also know enough about what’s happening around us to see that those with power and money continue to oppose to universal education where all classes come together.”

“So the workers’ children should unite not only among themselves, but with all children?”

“That is another representation of my ideal of the *children’s republics*. I don’t want to exclude, I don’t want to include, but I would like to promote cooperation. Not collaboration, but cooperation. Mature capitalists don’t understand the scope of non-individualistic advantages when they are formed in their own separate school in childhood. They will always want to defend their property and possessions first and foremost.”

“When you say something like that, you seem as radical as I am,” laughs Carine.

“I have my reasons for that. People keep holding up Pestalozzi’s happy poor as a model, but meanwhile, Fröbel is supposedly

dangerous. Karl wrote to me from Scotland that several German states, Prussia in the lead, prohibit or discourage Fröbel education because it's considered atheistic and demagogic. He expresses his surprise at this and says that religion was just a point of contention between him and his uncle. Karl Varnhagen is an acquaintance of his who supposedly claimed that the idiotic Minister Von Raumer, who banned the Kindergarten, was confusing Friedrich with Karl and that the whole fuss was related to the political disagreement over the women's college in Hamburg that Karl and Johanna headed a few years ago. That's a facile and perhaps misleading argument."
"So no more Kindergarten?"
"Not in a number of German states, no. But Friedrich's and Karl's former students are emigrating. Some are leaving for America with German immigrants. Karl also wrote me that Watertown in Wisconsin has had a German-language kindergarten for the children of German immigrants for several years now. In Boston, Elisabeth Peabody has started an English-language kindergarten, and Adolph Douai is apparently currently leading a German kindergarten there as well. Meanwhile, there are also initiatives in Scotland, of course, by Karl Fröbel and Johanna Küstner."

"Have you read the articles about Hendrik Jan van Lummel?" one of the *Vieille-Montagne* teachers asks Johanna.
"The one about visual education?" is her counter-question.
"Yes, what do you think about this? You know, we bought the visual education boards for our school."
"So in the village school history remains biblical," Johanna teases.
Her friend and colleague shrugs. "What do you expect, Johanna? We don't work in a barn in nature like you do with your children. We have classes and simultaneous learning, and those pictures really help us keep the children's attention. And we try to follow the creator's instructions so it doesn't just remain picture stories. I

read in our pedagogical magazine that colleague Van Lummel himself says that the pictures are a tool when… *the first instruction, given in accordance with the nature of the children, should serve to induce them to acquire clear concepts, if necessary to become in the next age a suitable and useful member of society and a true friend of Him who also took children to Himself and blessed them on earth.* But look, here are some of the pictures that connect human history with the Bible, and that's quite illustrative. It makes church attendance easier, and the children really understand better what their role is in serving others.*"*

*"*Then those Bible history charts are a good thing for you," Johanna teases further. "And I understand that you're trying to find a balance between Catholics and Protestants here in Kelmis. If you really want or need to teach Christian values, then Van Lummel's advice, which I read in the manual, is appropriate: '*Keep the greatest goal of all education—the formation of the heart through the development of the intellect—ever in mind, and make appropriate use of every opportunity that presents itself to touch the minds of the little ones, by making them perceive the love and greatness of the Creator, and thus sowing the seeds of true piety in their hearts. But no moral sermons; those are not for the little ones. A short, heartfelt word, where they can see that you mean it, will have more impact than twenty-five of the finest moral lessons.'* But something else now. I saw that there are also pictures for teaching geography, and that new ones are coming. The ones about trade and business might interest me too. Will you let me know when they're available?

As Johanna walks home, she thinks about what Jan Hendrik van Lummel is said to have pronounced about the teacher's personality: the pictures and all the resources themselves don't mean as much as that personality. It gradually becomes clear that training is important, but not enough. Of course, personality can go in many directions. Will the emerging teachers' associations pay attention to this? Will they promote cooperation more, with the result the

teacher in his class will also promote cooperation? Or will all that simultaneous teaching, visual or otherwise, limit the children to collaboration with the teacher, just as factory workers are forced to collaborate according to the rules of the owner and the capital holders?

Johanna is thinking of the latest education law in the Netherlands, where colleague van Lummel has been head teacher for many years. Since 1857, more clarity has been provided regarding regular and extended primary education. Extended primary education includes more subjects than just reading, writing, and arithmetic. Both also include geography, history, science, and singing. But extended primary education adds practical subjects, physical education, and other living languages.

Still, Johanna thinks it's a good thing that the law requires more subjects. What's worse is the retention of two types of primary education, which she fears will certainly lead to abuse. Visual education is now also incorporated into the law, and classrooms must not be harmful to children's health. All teachers must now hold a certificate of competence and good morals. Excellent schools can be asked to receive students to observe normal classes. And municipalities must have enough schools to accommodate all children of all denominations.

Johanna then reflects on the hypocrisy of those in power. Laws are being made for the school, but meanwhile, power remains hostage to money. The living conditions of the workers do not change through the education of the poor, but through the restriction of the enrichment of the rich. To that extent, she agrees with her friend Carine. She read in *Nederlandsch tijdschrift voor onderwijs en opvoeding [Dutch journal for schooling and upbringing]* an article titled *Thoughts on the superior or inferior physical development of children of the poor and less affluent compared to those of the more affluent.* Schools should be concerned not only with schooling but also with upbringing. Johanna understands the importance of guiding some

parents in raising their children. Too few people realise the importance of children's play and guided activity, even for making children more compliant and obedient. But that's not really what the article is about. She believes the complaints in the article are directed more at the inhumane industrial society and its rulers than at parents and colleagues. The article addresses, among other things, '*illness, all sorts of misery, which outside of school must so often sadden the child's ear. Here, the worries and distresses that so often invade the home like gloomy, uninvited guests are unknown. Here, all the burden of work and effort is far removed from the child of the lower classes, who so often develops swollen hands at home, even before the age of muscular strength. And for many a poor child, who must early experience the painful experiences of life's plagues at home, school is a true refuge.'* The text also discusses hiding shrill expressions of anger or hatred from children's ears, which isn't always possible in the family, but is certainly possible at school. Finally, the authors discuss the clean and tidy environment of the school compared to the grimy appearance of the poor worker's home. This can be romanticised, Johanna thinks, but she doesn't quite understand the point of the accusation that the school remains silent about the observed poverty and pretends the difficult circumstances in which the poor children live don't exist. Does one then want to blame the children's parents for their poverty, to point out to them that they need to maintain their homes differently, that they need to use a different language? Will that improve the children's lot? She is convinced that the article isn't a revolutionary call to action, urging teachers to say that everyone should take up arms against the capitalists who facilitate these kinds of situations by paying people starvation wages. But is the real meaning of the statement that things will get better for the children *'if the school will not only be a place of education, but also of upbringing'* and links the accusation that the school is silent about the complaint of poverty and pretends the dire conditions don't exist. Johanna finds the whole text a

rather noncommittal sermon.

In 1859, Henri and Johanna were first taxed on their annual income by the municipality of Kelmis because it exceeded 800 francs. Mayor de Lasaulx succeeded in obtaining the tax, which, according to many, is a step toward the definitive independence of the micro-state. Nevertheless, in their case, the tax led to debate. Teachers were exempt. Is Johanna a teacher or not? According to the municipality, she is not, as she could not provide proof of teacher training. Her argument that, as a woman in the 30s, she could barely study yet could provide proof of self-study supervised by Friedrich and Karl Fröbel was decisive in recognising her as a teacher. In any case, Johanna can't really speak of an income. Some of the children did pay a fee for the activities in her kindergarten with primary school, but the income on which tax was levied was Henri's.

The episode leads Johanna to inquire with her friends in Oostende about the rental of the house on Kapellestraat. For the past ten years, the rent has been deposited in a local bank, and the amount has grown considerably. Now that Frederick is sixteen and will soon be continuing his studies, the savings will come in handy. The Ostend friends tell her that the city currently has around 17,000 inhabitants, including approximately 2,000 English. Her house on Kapellestraat is one of 1,500 available and permanently occupied properties. They also let her know the precise terms and conditions for use and rent, so she can rest assured about the rental income in the coming years. The city is doing quite well. There is a lot of interest in summer beach activities, and there is also sufficient trade and industry to keep the city financially healthy. However, it is clear that only a small minority of those 17,000 residents are on the electoral rolls. That is roughly 500, and a little more for the city council. If she lived in Oostende and were a man, she might be on that list as a property owner. But for a woman, this is impossible

under current electoral laws. There isn't a single teacher on the electoral roll. Six butchers, four brewers, fifty pub owners, and thirty pastry chefs are eligible to vote.

Around the turn of the year, friends of the former *Association Démocratique* have quite a spectacular announcement. The English scientist the Parisian mentioned a few years ago is back. Apparently, he published a book that caused such a stir in the scientific community that all 1,250 copies of the first edition were sold by subscription before it hit booksellers in November. The reason? In this book titled *On the Origin of Species,* Charles Darwin discusses common descent. He includes evidence of homologies between humans and other mammals. After discussing sexual selection and outlining how it supposedly operates, he suggests that this could explain the differences between human races. Naturally, he provides numerous detailed observations and conclusions to defend himself against the many objections he anticipates. He remains vague on the key question of human origins, but writes: '*Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history.'* He introduces his theory with the sentences: *'As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected. From the strong principle of inheritance, any selected variety will tend to propagate its new and modified form.*' In his conclusion, he suggests that throughout history, the most astonishing forms of life have evolved from very simple beginnings, all while the planet continued to orbit the sun. Henri and his fellow commentators are not the only ones who anticipate the book will generate considerable controversy.

The friends living in England also mention the charity-based Sunday schools that are popular in various parts of the country and

are usually run by older women in their homes. Naturally, they involve very rudimentary education in morals and manners. The women often use reward cards with coloured drawings depicting family and biblical scenes, sometimes with a verse underneath. The cards have titles such as *'Be Ye Kind One To Another'* of '*Those That Seek Me Early Shall Find Me*'. Still according to Henri's friends, the use of such reward cards for those who behave well is also quite popular in weekday schools and in some *Local Authorities' Education Committees* of *County Councils* One might even speak of a nascent form of mass production. This plays on children's innate tendency to create collections. The cards feature the name of the recipient, giving the collection a personal touch. Children are thus encouraged to behave well, resulting in their own collection of reward cards. The cards feature drawings, sayings, or edifying verses such as:

While many a child in heathen lands
Of Jesus never heard
We in this Christian country learn
To read God's holy word.

Lord, may we love the truth we learn.
The Saviours' law obey,
And as we sit in Wisdom's school,
Delight in Wisdom's way.

One of the Dutch pub goers who overhears Henri and his friends talking says that these kinds of cards are exactly what the special schools could use. When asked what special schools are, he explains that there is a kind of school war going on in the Netherlands because of the non-religious nature of the state-run schools. This changed with the 1857 law, and under pressure from the church communities, the *Association for Christian National School Education* is established. This group includes some of what have become known as special schools. The informant believes these kinds of cards would certainly be appropriate there. He also says that Dutch schools occasionally adopt something from Belgium. This is the case

with Callewaert's notebooks. To help children learn to write, the examples are included in the notebook itself. This way, children don’t have to copy examples from the board onto a blank notebook. This is not only more convenient for the teacher but also provides sufficient support for developing writing skills more quickly. Furthermore, the teacher shouldn’t pass around loose slips of paper, as they often get lost and cause chaos in the classroom.

When Henri gets home, he tells Johanna what he heard about those notebooks. She shows him some of them, which she sometimes makes available to the children in her care. But she adds that there are more pleasant ways to acquire writing skills. And she invites Henri to take a look in the classroom barn. The children sit in small groups, helping each other with their activities. Johanna points to a table where Frederick is working with the now ten-year-old Annie Dehaan. After kindergarten with Johanna, Annie ended up in the village school. After three years, she acquired limited reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Johanna tells Henri that Carine convinced Annie’s father to include Annie in the group. Frederick, who enjoys helping his mother, quickly forged a friendship with Annie, and he enjoys helping her. The occasional peal of laughter from the work area confirms Johanna’ s observation that there are more pleasant ways to acquire skills.

Once again between enslavement and liberation

1862 started badly for those living near the major rivers. The entire Meuse valley flooded from Dinant to the Dutch border, and the other rivers that flow through southern Belgium and the Rhineland are also very swollen. Kelmis isn't affected much, although the abundant rain transforms the *Vieille-Montagne* mine in enormous muddy clay pits. The risk of getting stuck or even suffocating is considerable.

Frederick Teacher is already studying for his second year in Nivelles. He lives with his uncle. Leopold accidentally rediscovered Johanna's trail a few years after their mother's death through old acquaintances of *Vieille-Montagne*. Meanwhile, Leopold was running a successful workshop as a watchmaker and contacted his sister. He wrote that he would simply appreciate hearing from her occasionally, now that, to his knowledge, she was his only living relative. He remained single. Gradually, the correspondence became more frequent, and now Johanna asked Leopold to receive his nephew while he studies at the teacher training college in Nivelles. She offered him a quarter of the amount of money from the rental of the house on Kapellestraat to contribute to the costs. Frederick has almost completed his second year of study when he writes a long letter to his mother. He includes a photograph of himself posing with Leopold. Leopold wanted to send one of those modern-day photographs to his sister. The image cost 10 francs, the weekly wage of a male labourer. But clockmaker Leopold earns a good living…

Dear mother,

I'm doing well in Nivelles. Uncle Leopold continues to tell fascinating stories about how his love of trains and railways led him to become a clockmaker and repairer. Did you know that he now also maintains

clocks for churches and most of the local stations? His greatest passion is pocket and wristwatches, which are very popular here and offer a personal touch to those who wear them.
He also seems genuinely fascinated when I tell him about your school in the barn. Sometimes we talk about the differences between rich and poor. Uncle Leopold can get irritated by the virtuous charity of Catholics. As a successful craftsman with many businesses in Brussels, he's on the electoral roll, and I understand he feels well represented by people like Charles de Brouckère and André Napoleon Fontainas, you know, is now the mayor of Brussels. Did you know that de Brouckère was director of the Vieille-Montagne Company for a while? And did you know that, since Belgian independence, Brussels has always had a liberal mayor? A few weeks ago, by the way, I met the mayor when I had lunch with Uncle Leopold at a restaurant. It was an interesting conversation. We discussed, among other things, an upcoming congress of liberals and republicans on the social nature of education. The congress will be held in Brussels, and Mayor Fontainas is chairing it. Although I'm thinking of you all with longing including my student and friend Annie, I plan to stay in Brussels a little longer to attend the congress. But afterward, I'll immediately take the train via Ottignies to Liège and Herbesthal! But, Mother, the reason for the lunch I was talking about has to do with you. I met a remarkable woman whose mother, Zoé Gamond, you told me about. Uncle Leopold had invited her for a conversation about her. He wanted to know more about the Phalenstère she was trying to establish, modeled on the current Menage Societaire, then Colonie Societaire, based on the ideas of Charles Fournier. Victor Considerant was also involved, you know. As you also know, Zoé came to Brussels a few years later. You know the rest. At the behest of Charles Rogier, she became an inspector of nursery, primary, and teacher training schools, and you know how she always advocated for decent education for girls and women. Well, after Uncle Leopold heard the story about Zoé from Isabelle Gatti, her daughter's name, we talked at length about universal education. I told her about your work in Moresnet and heard about the magazine The education of women *Isabelle Gatti just launched a book advocating for even better education for women. I was truly impressed by her drive, and we agreed to*

correspond. I took the liberty of telling her you'd definitely be interested in writing with her as well.

Furthermore, thanks to one of my teachers, I received some interesting reading material by the Russian philosopher Leo Tolstoy. Did you know that he founded a school on his estate in Yasnaya Polyana for the children of farm labourers who had only recently been freed from their serf status? There are other places in the world where much needs to be done to make popular education universal. He describes his educational principles in an essay he published last year, titled "The School of Yasnaya Polyana". In it, he strongly criticises didactics and proposes spontaneity in the learning process. You will benefit from reading what he writes. He also has considerable criticism of what he calls the utilitarian approach, to which he includes both Aristotle and Rousseau. Of the latter, and also of Locke, for that matter, he clearly states that they were only interested in educating the wealthy. When I read him, I think of you and what you told me about your grandfather. Tolstoy is genuinely concerned with popular education, and if you believe my teachers here, he's not being thanked for it. He's even reportedly being guarded by the Tsar's secret agents. Regarding the school itself, he explains that it develops according to the guidelines established jointly by teachers and students. He claims that despite the influence of adults, students have the right not to attend school, and once there, they also have the right not to listen to the teacher. On the other hand, the teachers have the right to refuse admission. But to do so, they must use all the influence they can to win over the community, where children are always in the majority. It seems odd, but you certainly can't call it simultaneous or mutual education, if I'm not mistaken.

You may have heard that the training in teacher training colleges is being adjusted. According to my teachers, not much will change at the State Teacher Training College in Nivelles. It's mainly the bishops who govern Catholic education who are making themselves heard. Those conservative troublemakers refuse to hear about extensive intellectual training for teachers. They say it would make them pedantic. I think they especially don't want intellectuals in the primary village schools. They continue to oppose the dissemination of knowledge. What, in God's name, you might well say, are they afraid of? The rules for teaching in

lower State secondary schools are different, at least. After my teacher training, I'm thinking of taking the one-year course and registering for the state exam to become a language and history teacher. But that's for the future.
How happy I will be to see you all again.
I hug you all

A few weeks later, Frederick is home. He's spending his time visiting friends and working with his mother on improvements to the barn. During a break, Johanna asks him about the conference in Brussels. Frederick tells her it was a kind of founding conference for the *International Social Sciences Association* or ISSA in English. There was an interesting delegation from the Dutch *tot 't Nut*. Johanna is surprised. She explains that this society had taken care of the national primary schools, including those in Oostende during the *United Kingdom of the Netherlands*, where she attended primary school at the insistence of her grandfather, Jean-Jacques. Frederick says that the delegation present is looking for partners in other countries. Mayor Fontainas clearly emphasised the need to accelerate the slow development of local groups in terms of social progress and that the ISSA could play a role in this. A new conference is planned for Ghent, and the attendees left with the task of encouraging public and private local organisations, academies, professional, literary, medical, and scientific associations, and all other potentially interested groups to engage in joint consultations. Mother and son agree to cooperate modestly, wherever and whenever they can.

In 1863, Doctor Wilhelm Molly come to live in Neutral Moresnet. He joins *Vieille-Montagne* and begins his practice as a company doctor. He soon becomes the general practitioner for a large part of Kelmis's residents. He marries Johanna Bender there. Doctor Molly succeeds in suppressing a threatening cholera epidemic, partly by caring for the poorest members of the population at home. In the

pub and on the street, he quickly earns the nickname “the people’s friend.”

Meanwhile, Frederick is back in Nivelles. He’s preparing for his state exams to start working as a language and history teacher at a lower secondary school, preferably in Liège. During a chance visit to a printing house, Frederick meets a slightly older young man who works there as a proofreader. During their conversation, Frederick mentions that his mother moved from Oostende to Kelmis. The young man then adds that he happened to be born in Oostende. He introduces himself as César Depaepe. They briefly discuss Oostende, which is increasingly becoming a seaside resort for the wealthy citizens of Belgium and surrounding countries, after Leopold I commissioned the construction of a wooden summer palace in the dune area between Oostende and Mariakerke in anticipation of the construction of the summer palace near Langestraat. César then asks if Frederick has time to have a drink together the following Saturday and discuss more serious matters.

That Saturday, the two young men discuss the ISSA congress, which César has expressed interest in. He talks about the “Flemish people Forward!” movement, which he was involved with a few years ago, but which he wants to engage in social progress on a broader scale. He tells Frederick about the two associations of freethinkers founded by Désiré Brismée, ‘*les Solidaires (the Solitary ones)* and ‘*l’Affranchissement*’ (*the emancipation)*. Both associations bring together people who advocate for civil burial and also pursue various social goals, hence his interest in what Frederick told him about the ISSA. He himself is a member of *The Solitary ones.* He suggests Frederick to read Proudhon, especially his essay on the nature of property. Frederick knows that this versatile man once said ‘*Either property will carry off the Republic, or the Republic will carry off property’* in response to the protest against his proposals to tax property and invest the resulting capital in social services, in addition to the mutual health insurance funds he advocated.

Frederick mentions in passing that his parents didn't think much of Proudhon when they were active in the Association Démocratique. César suggests this may have been related to the vision of Karl Marx, who was then the leader of that association. Proudhon was willing to be an appointed correspondent for the association, but with reservations: he wasn't interested in new dogmas with their own apostles, but rather in seeking workable solutions from different angles. Although Marx initially praised Proudhon as a true proletarian socialist, he would later call him petty-bourgeois. Frederick laughs at the idea that of all people exactly Marx accused someone else of being petty-bourgeois. Perhaps this was related to Proudhon's statements about the revolutionary nature of a struggle, César believes. In a discussion with Marx, Proudhon is said to have stated that one cannot advocate revolutionary action as a means of social reform, because this so-called means would simply be an appeal to violence, to arbitrariness—in short, a contradiction when it comes to social reform. He said he believed the French proletariat had such a great thirst for knowledge that one would be very unwelcome among them if one offered them only blood to drink. He believes it would be wrong to speak as exterminators.

Frederick says he'd like to talk to his parents about Proudhon, because they ultimately don't see much point in radical solutions and prefer a dialogue-oriented approach. However, a few months later, his mother criticises saying that Proudhon envisioned women as housewives, dependent on their husbands, as an alternative to women in factories. He often spoke out against women's right to vote. He held very paternalistic views regarding the freeing of black slaves. Furthermore, he sometimes confuses Judaism with capital, which gives him the impression of being an anti-Semite.

Johanna's comments will make Frederick feel later on to swing back and forth between mutual organisation as César sees it and more radical changes such as some of the later *International Association of Workers* will advocate.

Johanna and Frederick read reports about the development of the boys' school in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The so-called Lancaster method was said to be outdated there because last year *Revised Code of Education* described the school the method as too poor, citing that too much is left to unqualified older students and a shortage of teaching staff. The school had already enriched its curriculum on its own initiative, thanks to the intervention of local figures, according to mother and son.
Meanwhile, several educational journals have been discussing the education policy in Portugal led by Braancamp Freire, a minister to King Luís. A Normal School was established last year in Lisbon's Marvila district. In his opening speech, the minister stated, among other things, that the career of a teacher is identical to that of a priest. Therefore, the teacher's mission would entail a true priesthood. He wanted the *Escola Normal de Lisboa* to be an example for the rest of the country, because the school did not limit itself to learning a new method. This school's project was much broader and more ambitious and would adhere to the motto '*Teachers are not found, they are trained.'*
And now, over a year later, the first free evening course for adults has been launched at the Normal School. The goal is to teach adults to read, write, and calculate using the Portuguese Castilho method. The training school's teacher is assisted by two students for this course. Frederick also reads in a publication on education and social affairs that a group of workers in Lisbon has formed a new association: the *Associação União Fraternal dos Operários da Fabricação de Tabacos [Fraternal Union of Tobacco Manufacturing Workers Association]* was just founded.

That evening Henri talks Johanna, children and guests about the further life and death of Hong Xiuquan. At one point he had said that he would like to know how his interpretation of being the son of the Christian God and thus the younger brother of Jesus would

influence the poor people in China [See also *Enslaved by Power*].
“Hong’s sect quickly acquired several leaders, a kind of apostles. But it was primarily Hong himself who believed in his resurrection and his divine mission. Therefore, China had to be freed from Confucianism. And that had to be done with sword and fire,” Henri begins.
“So, the usual story,” Frederick concludes. “Violence and suffering are supposed to lead people to a better world. What is wrong with those Abrahamic prophets? Do they know so terribly poorly the figure of Christ, or was he after all a kind of Spartan general about whom they know more than we do?”
“Arrogance due to one’s own cultivated ignorance perhaps?” suggests Johanna.
“Or another example that change involves bloodshed,” thinks Carine.
“I don’t know,” Henri continues. “What I did hear is that Hong began by burning and destroying everything that referred to Confucius in his own home. His first followers were family members who, like him, had failed the civil service exam and belonged to the Hakka minority. Perhaps they thought Confucius was responsible for this failure. So he helped them to destroy shrines in the surrounding villages, much to the dismay of the locals. Whether this would tempt the Christian God to allow them to pass the exam is, I fear, unclear.”
“But how could he win new members for his sect?” asks Carine’s husband.
“They were expelled from their own province and changed their approach. They began preaching and traveled as far as four hundred kilometers from the area. Hong himself spent several months in Guangxi, where he writes *Exhortations to Worship the One True God* before returning to his own region to become a village teacher.
Later he meets a Protestant preacher and wants to convert to

Protestantism. But that does not happen and Hong finds one of his other preaching relatives, Feng, who he learns founded the *Association of the Worshippers of God*. When Feng is banished, Hong joins him. Two other cult members take over leadership of the association. They claim to frequently enter trances and then speak as part of the holy trinity.

“That indeed has little to do with revolution and little to do with popular development,” Frederick notes. “Proudhon could argue about this, as he did with Marx.”

“Are you still not over your love for Proudhon?” Johanna remarks teasingly. “But you’re right, this is about blindness, not enlightenment, I’m afraid.”

“Probably,” Henri continues. “Moreover, upon their return, Hong and Feng claim they investigated the others’ claims and found them to be true. This leads them to clash with jealous Western preachers, who watch with dismay as Hong becomes more successful than they are. They spread the rumour that he wasn’t even truly baptised. Hong then works on an adapted translation of the Bible, the Taiping Bible, and explains that it depicts the vision of true faith in China before it was suppressed by Confucius and the Imperial power. The god of the Old Testament is said to punish wicked nations and reward those who follow him. But Hong adds his own morality: the Israelites don’t drink wine, and in Genesis 38:16-26 he eliminates the sexual relationship between a father and his son’s widow. All in all, Hong preaches a mixture of communal utopianism, the gospel, and oriental syncretism. He proclaims sexual equality, with the sect keeping men and women separate. All followers are said to deposit their possessions in a common treasury.”

“And in the meantime, is he getting anything done by the local authorities?” asks Carine.

“Indirectly. Feng’s followers were mainly in an area controlled by bandits, and the fact that they are a Hakka minority makes the bandits turn against them more than against the authorities. But

when push came to shove, they preferred Hong to the danger of being caught by the authorities, and so often fled with the sect when the authorities were on their heels. As tensions with the authorities mounted, Hong increasingly saw himself as a rebel. Fifteen years ago, the sect was said to have had around thirty thousand followers. In 1851, it escalated into real riots and massacres, with Hong's followers emerging victorious, and Hong declaring that *heavenly kingdom of transcendental peace* will come quickly now."

Frederick sighs. "Nothing new under the sun, then!"

"Not really, no," Henri agrees. "After capturing Yangon, the sect and its army also captured the city of Nanjing. Hong made it the capital of his movement. Here, there are indeed traces of a kind of social concern. Hong established a well-structured civil bureaucracy, reformed the calendar. He banned the use of opium (remember Johanna, this was at the root of the entire impoverishment resulting from the English import of the drug), and women gradually achieved greater social equality with men. Moral and religious rules originated the Heavenly Palace where Hong resided. And then, you guessed it, the distinction between classes resurfaced. Polygamy was forbidden, but in the Palace, Hong and his closest associates retained the right to concubines. The arrogance of power reared its ugly head—or wasn't he, in his own words, a son of God? Things went terribly wrong when, in 1856, former associate Yang was murdered with his family because Hong suspected him of harbouring excessive ambitions. You could say that there was a "palace revolution" is going on."

"And will you also get the reissue of the Terror?" asks Johanna.

"Not really," Henri replies. "After Yang's assassination, things went downhill. The capture of Shanghai failed, and the Qing dynasty received Western aid to destroy the sect. Early this year, the Emperor's soldiers besieged the city of Nanjing until food ran out. Hong ordered his followers to eat heavenly manna, in Chinese form

consisting of sweet dew and medicinal plants. Hong also ate it and likely succumbed to it.
I also heard that his body was exhumed two months after his death by order of the Emperor, to ensure he had actually died. They then decapitated and cremated the body."
"A sad ending for an ultimately rather pathetic figure," Johanna thinks. "If you still have the time and inclination to hear a more pleasant story about how to work on public education despite the opposition of the conservative authorities, then I can tell you something too." She winks at Frederick. "Isabelle Gatti recently wrote to me that she started her *Education Courses for Young Girls* on Rue du Marais in Brussels. She wants to provide girls with a solid scientific education without clerical interference. She writes that she has a great deal of interest among the liberal bourgeoisie."
Frederick says: "So she managed to set up what she wanted. I hope for her success. I'll try to visit her as soon as I'm in Brussels."
"But Isabelle also talked about her contact with Charles or Karel Buls," Johanna continues. "He was in Amsterdam at the ISSA congress, where, like other proponents of secular education, he showed great interest in the organisational model of the Association *'t Nut.* According to Isabelle, Karel is mainly concerned with public education. He is a school principal and has just founded with several other principals the *Ligue de l'enseignement* [*League of Education]*. The *League* aims to reform schooling and wants to use public libraries for this purpose, especially in adult education. There have been previous attempts to establish such an association at the initiative of anticlerical *Libre-Pensée*-associations, but without results. Karel Buls wrote that those earlier attempts to organize popular education were primarily intended to lead to personal and political emancipation and break through the '*papist Roman Catholic joke*'. These liberals have more far-reaching plans. For everyone to be able to participate emancipated in democracy, the working population must be prepared for this. According to the pioneers of

the *League*, there are three broad goals to be pursued in this regard."

"Let me guess," says Henri, "education is part of it."

"Certainly," Johanna replies, "but our Frederick will be happy to hear that Fourier, Saint-Simon, and his beloved Proudhon are also present, in a matter of speaking." She laughs and continues: "Look: they aim for self-help, cooperative savings associations and mutual insurance companies, more education through local or public libraries, and encourage participation in production and consumer cooperatives."

Carine notes: "So austerity, saving, education, and upbringing are the answer to social ills. Does that apply only to the poor, whom we like to call the people, or does it apply to everyone?"

Henri replies: "Those radical liberals are primarily concerned with the emancipation of the people, that's certainly true. It's not clear to me how they intend to deal with the rich. They seem to want to enrich everyone. Do you think they're oversimplifying things?"

Carine replies: "I think that they mainly misjudge the arrogance of aristocrats, conservatives and large property owners. It is of course good having something to work ***for***, but perhaps one will also have to work ***against*** the current high flight of capital."

"Maybe you're right," Frederick notes. "Mother just said '*public education despite conservative opposition'* We haven't finished discussing how to address that opposition. But Carine, I think you can agree that opposing something without clarifying its conceptual background can be dangerous. Just think of the years of terror after the French Revolution."

Henri continues: "So we should also target the rich to make them realise that they can live a good life with less? Should we send them all to a *phalenstère*? I've been reading up on those attempts to set up Fourier-communities after the letter you wrote to your mother a few months ago, son." Henri looks at Frederick. "And what's striking is that there are wealthy people, even large landowners,

who are willing to make a donation to such an initiative, but they don't actively participate in it."
"Maybe we should think about a slower evolution," Johanna suggests. "I have taken out a subscription to the *Magazine d'éducation et de récréation* that Jean Macé and Jules Verne just launched together with Pierre-Jules Hetzel, partly because I saw the name Jean Macé. You know," Johanna looks at Carine, "that's the pedagogue who has been putting his ideas into practice in Alsace for about ten years in a school for young girls in connection with science education." She turns her gaze to Frederick and says: "As a teacher, he came up with the idea of writing popular science books for children, such as *The Story of a Bite of Bread, Letters to a Little Girl About Our Organs and Functions*, of which we have a copy here in the library. To that *Magazine* Jules Verne is lending his support. I have subscribed to because of the serial *The English at the North Pole.* The magazine's founders say they see education as a collective ideal and a remedy for social injustice. The magazine aims to contribute to a better life for everyone by spreading knowledge for everyone."
Henri notes: "That's a noble act, of course, and you're probably right. It takes time. Still, perhaps not everyone will read this magazine. For someone earning around 200 French francs a year, a 12-franc subscription is unaffordable; consider the cost of food and rent. So many potential readers rely on the library or schools like ours. And then they still need to have time to read, of course. I don't know if the workers at *Vieille-Montagne* for example, have that time available."

In the following years, Frederick is busy, so he visits Moresnet less often. Naturally, he maintains a lively correspondence with his parents. Annie is fifteen and often writes to Frederick, who is now twenty-one. Frederick sometimes feels a little nervous about her letters. He thinks back to the years when she asked for his help as a

child. He was her age then and sometimes helped his mother. He always felt very comfortable in her company, and they are good friends. Every time he goes to Moresnet, they visit each other. He enjoys hearing her talk about her experiences as a domestic helper and permanent babysitter for one of the engineers at the *Vieille-Montagne.* Since two years when she had to provide for herself due to her father's health problems, he understands from her letters that Annie feels very comfortable in his company. He feels embarrassed because he knows full well that he has twice been unable to make a more serious advance, first with a kindergarten teacher and now with a friend he often hangs out with since living in Liège. Twice, at that precise moment, he saw Annie's face appear in his mind, and he immediately started stammering about something other than what he had actually intended. He suspects he is in love with Annie, but he anxiously keeps those feelings to himself. And meanwhile, he tries to entertain her with his stories about his first experiences as a language and history teacher in the *Athenée Royal* of Liège.
Frederick has, of course, already been in touch several times with Octavie Masson, who is piloting Fröbel education. They discuss the growing interest in Fröbel schooling not only among preschool and primary school teachers, but also among more informed parents. Octavie explains to Frederick that this represents a major change, as his mother will surely have explained to him. Instead of simply "safeguarding" the youngest children and protecting them from accidents and danger, the goal is to educate them. You can teach preschoolers a great deal at a young age if you make their environment a place for play and observation.

In 1865, the Belgian government removes Oostende from its list of fortified towns. This lays the foundation for the municipality to develop as a seaside resort and thus enter its heyday. The city walls disappear, and work began on the moorings for the steamboats that bring train and boat passengers from London directly to Oostende

train station, from where almost all major continental capitals can be reached.

In this same year, the first king of the Belgians dies. His son, Leopold II will would not only oversee the development of the coastal city but also largely determine its future.

The aspirations of the aristocratic and bourgeois French elite parallel those of the Belgian elite. However, the French don't have a compliant king, but a disillusioned emperor. Although reports of rulers announcing they'll stand up for the working class are always met with suspicion in Henri's local pub, they are discussed. And today, it's mainly about Napoleon III, the self-proclaimed Emperor of France, you could say. French Catholics are displeased with his Italian policies, and the major capitalists and industrialists are angry about the free trade agreement the emperor signed with the British government five years ago. And now, the Emperor seems to be courting support from the rest of the population especially the agricultural and factory workers.

In 1862 he founded the *Society of the Imperial Prince* with the intention of establishing a fund to provide temporary assistance to poor working-class families. He also wants to push through a new law allowing the labour inspectorate to effectively tax restricted child labour. This law is blocked by the Council of State. The Emperor then finances the trip of a workers' delegation led by Henri Tolain to the London World's Fair. The socialist Albert Thomas fears that this would usher in a kind of imperial socialism, which could be life-threatening for the republic. Meanwhile, the delegation returns from London and immediately demands a law allowing workers to organize along British lines.

During their pub gatherings, Henri and his friends follow Tolain. That is why in 1894 the *Manifeste des Soixante* is topic of discussion.

"Tolain is certainly an advocate for regulations that make workers less dependent on the voluntary benevolence of ordinary citizens and the wealthy," the barman begins. "The demand to further

expand and generalise the mutual health insurance system seems to me like a wise move."

"Apparently, the manifesto also advocates for better education for workers," Henri notes. "Furthermore, the manifesto calls for a more flexible law on associations, replacing the existing law. Primary and vocational education also need to be addressed."

"But whether that primary education will benefit the workers or the administrators of the republic once more transformed into an empire, remains to be seen," someone notes. "You'd better talk about it at home," he adds, addressing Carine's husband.

"Carine sees little point in this sudden love between the emperor and certain sections of the working population," he responds.

Henri continues: "Johanna has doubts primarily about the kind of education they're referring to. She believes she deduces from what she reads in educational journals that workers' associations or mutuals that provide education often have no other desire than to provide working-class children who aren't yet in school with the same services their own or other states provide in a public school system. And according to her, that's often just basic instruction. Philosophy or reflection on the inequality between classes and between rich and poor is not included. I think that aligns with the following passage from the Manifesto: '*Let us examine the current situation without bitterness or prejudice. What does the democratic bourgeoisie want that we do not want with the same ardor? Universal suffrage free from all obstacles? We want it. Freedom of the press and freedom of assembly governed by common law? We want them. The complete separation of Church and State, a balanced budget, municipal franchises? We want all of that.*

Well! Without our help, the bourgeoisie will obtain or preserve, with difficulty, these rights, these freedoms, which are the essence of a democratic society. What do we want more especially than them, or at least more energetically, because we are more interested in it? Primary education, free and compulsory, and freedom to work.'

Does equality only involve generalising what were once the rights and privileges of a few? That seems a feasible option to me. But should everyone live in palaces? Or should we consider more standardised housing, including for aristocrats, the bourgeoisie, and workers? Should everyone have a house with a barn? Is equality more for everyone, or a redistribution of what exists? That's why I think Johanna's doubts are justified."

The Parisian notes: "You can hardly expect someone who has not been raised to learn to think to spontaneously imagine an education where thinking and dialogue are central. As you yourself know very well, the barn for the *Republican Children's Society* is a concept of your wife, who was able to learn from her family and from pedagogical thinkers who went and continue to go beyond what is taught to future teachers in the now-emerging Normal Schools. You recently quoted the Portuguese Braancamp Freire, who supposedly said that teachers are not found, but formed. And he is probably thinking of a different kind of formation than you and your wife. Popular development in the broadest sense, the humanitarian awareness of rich and poor alike, is not a spontaneous development. And I think much will depend on the empathy of those who initiate the process. Otherwise, you will quickly slide from development to indoctrination in the current sense of the word."

"The current sense?" asks the innkeeper.

The Parisian replies: "Yes, this is no longer about instilling moral values linked to a doctrine that makes coexistence possible, but about imposing a way of thinking, a stricter instruction, you might say."

"To come back to the *Manifeste des Soixante*," says someone else: "the deletion in the Civil Code of Article 1781 '*The Foreman is taken at his word regarding the data relating to the portion of wages, the payment of wages for the year and for the instalments given for the current year'* will make workers less dependent on misrepresented information intentionally or not. This will change the way books

are kept in the workshops. But whether clear agreements, let alone written agreements, will be reached with all workers remains to be seen."

"That might be the reason for the demand to be able to establish trade union chambers," Carine's husband believes. "But it's a long road. The demands may sound valid, but the reasons are more conservative. Look at the position of women. The manifesto says: '*We, whose children often spend their earliest years in the demoralising and unhealthy environment of factories, or in apprenticeships, which are still little more than a state close to domesticity; we, whose women are forced to desert the home for excessive work, contrary to their nature, and destroying the family; we, who do not have the right to agree to peacefully defend our wages, to protect ourselves against unemployment, we affirm that equality written in the law is not in the customs, and that it has yet to be achieved in practice. Those who, lacking education and capital, cannot resist selfish and oppressive demands through freedom and solidarity, are inevitably subject to the domination of capital: their interests remain subordinate to other interests*'. I wonder why there has to be a different discussion about the excess work women do and not about that of men. I wonder to what extent the work many men are asked to do isn't also unnatural. Is the destruction of the family solely the result of women's working conditions, or isn't it also the result of the fact that those who think only about capital accumulation still view both men and women as objects?"

About a year after the previous conversation, the conversation turns to Tolain again. The innkeeper tells us that "your old friend Marx," winking at Henri, who is standing nearby, "was very pleased about the Manifesto that was being discussed at the office of the *International Workers Mouvement* in London. It is therefore no surprise to anyone that Tolain is taking up the leadership of the office of the *Association Internationale des Travailleurs* in France."

Henri takes the opportunity to recall Proudhon's warnings about the

illusion of workers' parliamentarism. Proudhon advocates abstention from elections, Henri adds. Personally, he continues to see more benefit in a network of mutual benefit societies that engage in dialogue and steer clear of the illusion of equality of property—ownership of money, land, workers, or power.
The Parisian smiles at him and says: "I appreciate your unwavering belief in your utopia, Henri. I will be the first to help you and your wife set up a network of *Republican Children's Societies*."

The American continent is far from Moresnet, but the proximity of Prussia and the Kingdom of Saxony, from which many people venture across the Atlantic lured by a better life, means that the war between the northern Union of States and the southern Confederacy is occasionally discussed in the pub. The conflict is supposedly over by now and, according to the newspapers, was a very bloody affair. According to Henri, this war will cause generations of distrust between citizens of the different states, now united again under a single president. Naturally, slavery is discussed. According to Carine's husband, it is increasingly disappearing in the northern industrial states not so much because more owners find slavery objectionable, but simply because a poorly paid worker is more productive than an unpaid slave in an industrial production unit. In the states with large plantations, slave labour is still profitable. Moreover, the innkeeper tells, slaveholders have apparently been making extra income from breeding slaves since the ban on importing new supplies from Africa. They then sell them among themselves and also to newcomers so that the newly occupied lands are gradually supplied with workers. Henri thinks that a nuanced view may be necessary. He has, of course, read the book *Uncle Tom's cabin or the life among the lowly* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, of which Johanna has a copy in her "people's library". She also has the Dutch edition for children of *A Peek into Uncle Tom's Cabin by Aunt Marie, for her nieces and nephews; with an address by*

the author, H. Beecher-Stowe, to the youngsters. There are also French and German copies. According to the Parisian, the book is intended to portray the struggle between the Union and the Confederacy as if it were solely about the abolition of slavery. This would suit the Union, allowing it to reconnect with the European Royal Houses and states that abolish or condemn slavery on paper. Henri also finds this a somewhat one-sided analysis. He agrees that the book is more of a pamphlet. It's too early to know whether this is a good or bad thing for the slaves. Apparently, it prompted the publication of several other books defending slavery and proposing a kind of idyllic society in which good white patriarchs watch over their Black 'children', who all together provide the rich harvest of the estate controlled by those patriarchs. A new version of the good landowner or lord watching over his serfs. These large landowners naturally have a hard time with the industrial capitalists who watch over their capital and find that paying low wages to workers in factories and workshops instead of treating them as slaves benefits capital.

Without Frederick's help but with Carine's constant presence, Johanna works with around fifty children of the *Republican Children's Society* at the end of June 1866. She plans all the outdoor activities together with Carine and the children. There's the vegetable garden maintenance, of course. But there are also several trips to Kelmis. They even had a chat with one of the administrators of *Vieille-Montagne.* He was quite impressed by the children's language skills and the level of their questions. Johanna heard this later from her colleague at the village school. However, the question was raised about whether it was a good idea to encourage children to be so assertive. Johanna shrugged.

Shortly afterward, the friends learn of Adolph Diesterweg's death. This prompts Johanna and her colleagues to read *Der Unterricht in der Kleinkinderschule oder die Anfänge der Unterweisung und Bildung in*

der Volksschule [Lessons in the Infant School or the Beginnings of Instruction and Education in the Elementary School] of the pedagogue. In it he clearly takes a stand for a social pedagogy. Johanna had already read about this in the *Pedagogical review* when it was published by Karl Mager. The term “Social Pedagogy” was used as an alternative to collective pedagogy and in opposition to individual pedagogy. Collective pedagogy could, of course, be reminiscent of mutual or simultaneous education. According to Johanna, the term “Social Pedagogy” places more emphasis on the content of the work with the children and less on the form. Her *Republican Children's Society* is mainly about the content. She deliberately chose a form of work where children aren’t subjected to simultaneous instruction, but work together, under the guidance of two adults.

Co-education of boys and girls remains a rare exception in Catholic Europe. Moreover, girls’ schools often remain outside the scope of public schools. The *Minister of the Kingdom* for example, declares in the Portuguese Chamber of Representatives that there are too few girls’ schools because there are no female teachers and the teacher training colleges haven’t yet trained any graduates. Municipalities also lack the funds to establish new schools. But that’s only part of the problem, if it’s not just talk for the sake of it. In the Catholic southern country, the Commission for Public Instruction had, after all, defined female education once again three years earlier: ‘*Woman herself, with few exceptions, is simply a woman, and it is urgently necessary to instruct her mind to be the companion and adviser of her husband, to be the educator of their children in early childhood, and to maintain harmony and enlightenment in the home environment.’*

However, there are mixed schools in the province that give girls the opportunity to at least learn to read and write and, perhaps unintentionally, to show that girls and boys have the same learning opportunities.

Meanwhile, it seems that phonics methods are being further

tinkered to accelerate reading learning, under the influence of experimental teachers. In the Netherlands, Mr. Bouman's normal words method is gaining popularity, and is gradually replacing the Prinsen method. With wall charts and booklets containing basic words such as *roos, peer hoed,* (*rose, pear, hat)* are depicted and presented in print and script, an attempt is made to have the consonants pronounced without additional sounds. The letters are introduced with verses and stories. Johanna is pleased to see another method emerge here that is based on meaningful words for the children. The difference with her own approach is that she still uses words she adopts from the children themselves. The former schoolhouse on Kaaistraat, later on Keizerskaai, remains her reference for this.

Towards the end of the year, Johanna learns from Karel Buls that he is now frequently corresponding with Jean Macé. She suspects this will please Isabelle Gatti. Frederick mentions that Jean Macé was present at the general meeting of the *Belgian League of Education* in September in Luik. According to Karel Buls, Jean Macé published in *l'Opinion Nationale* a solid article in which he called for a French *League.* When Jean Macé finally took matters into his own hands, he asked Karel Buls to find some people interested in joining the French League, saying: '*It's an asset to my game if I can show that this is already being taken seriously abroad*.' Frederick joins the *Belgian League*, Johanna registers with the French *League.* She is not only concerned with the association that advocates free, compulsory and liberal education, but also with the appreciation she has for *Education and Recreation Magazine* to which she continues to subscribe.

While Johanna and Frederick talk with Carine about the future of the various emerging National Education Leagues, the topic of conversation in the local pub is the brief war between Austria and Prussia. The stories of Wilhelm Molly, who served for a few weeks

as an army doctor on the Prussian side of the conflict are the starting point. According to Henri, you could almost call this a fraternal war. He hears Molly say that in some cases, only the uniform revealed whether you were dealing with a soldier from the Prussian or the Austrian army. But what the listeners are most receptive to are the stories about the suffering of the wounded. Not much has changed on the battlefield, despite Florence Nightingale's testimonies just over ten years ago after the Battle of Sevastopol. Wilhelm refers to two of his colleagues who, together with the entrepreneur Henry Dunant, worked on the Geneva Convention, also signed by the Prussian government in 1864. With this convention, the signatory kingdoms and states agreed to guarantee immunity when captured in addition to the protection of the civilian population. Furthermore, the destruction of institutions that treat wounded and sick soldiers must be prevented. These institutions must also receive and treat all combatants impartially. The Red Cross symbol serves as a means of identification for persons and equipment covered by the convention. Austria had not signed the convention at the time of the war but reportedly plans to do so now. Discussions are being held about the difficulty of putting such an empathetic convention into practice. Henri again points to the problem of fratricidal warfare. How does a doctor or nurse decide on the priority of care? Does only the wound play a role, or does the origin of the injured person also play a role? Can a convention influence emotions?

In April 1867, the topic of conversation at the local pub is devoted to a message brought by the Parisian. According to Pierre Mahé in *Le Timbrophile,* Moresnet would issue its own stamps. Everyone is astonished, because Mayor Joseph Kohl never said anything about it, and when questioned about it, he seems just as surprised as the other pub goers. A few days later, the innkeeper had the explanation. It was an April Fool's joke by the Belgian

philatelist and publisher of *The Postage Stamp.* Jean-Baptiste Moens was fed up with Mahé plagiarising him all the time. He invented the whole thing so he could ridicule Mahé. The clues were there. The article was published on April 1st and refers to the Visch (fish) printing house, so it was an April Fool's joke. The joke is met with hearty laughter, but in his corner Wilhelm Molly is pondering.
Furthermore, the plans of director Louis St Paul de Sinçay of *Vieille-Montagne* are discussed. That's the big man ten years after Charles de Brouckère left the board. The idea of attracting ore from other mines and thus not jeopardising zinc production in Kelmis now that the local mine is yielding less will at least keep the factory running. What will happen to the miners themselves is anyone's guess.
The great enthusiasm is because the project will bring the railway to Kelmis. That would happen within five years. People are waiting to see.

Napoleon III cared not only for his relations with the working class, but also for his empire's image abroad. When he financed Tolain's trip to the London World's Fair in 1864, he had already decided that the Champ-de-Mars in Paris would host a similar exhibition, with even greater splendour than the *World's Fair* of 1855. On April 1, 1867, the exhibition opens to the public and remains so until November of this year. Agriculture and industry are central themes. Naturally, inventions involving electricity are also included. Jules Verne drew inspiration from it for a new book, which would later be published under the title *Twenty thousand leagues under the sea.* In this same electricity-filled year, Michael Faraday dies in August. In Moresnet, it is learned that during the Crimean War, he rejected for ethical reasons the British government's request to develop chemical weapons.
Back on the subject of the World's Fair, The Parisian scornfully notes that Napoleon not only wants to impress with the *location*, but also with the *French ability*. He claims this is the reason why

Alphonse Beau de Rochas received a generous grant to further develop an efficient four-stroke engine. When asked why he speaks so mockingly, he clarifies that it's not about the invention itself, but about the prevailing sense of nationality. French, English, German, Belgian, etc. inventions. Instead of assuming, as serious researchers do, that inventions are made by people and that their creativity depends not on their nationality but on the opportunity they have to develop it.

When Henri relays this conversation home, Johanna notes that development at this point also depends on nationality. Henri looks surprised. She explains further: "Since the rise of the demand for universal education and training, you can clearly see how different Republican or Royal States are working on this in different ways. More conservative governments are limiting educational opportunities for large segments of the population, while more liberal governments are generalising education and training. But they do so in different ways, and even proponents of universal liberal education can see it as a subservient force. I think the education leagues can play a role in favour of or against the path to choose."

There is no such national league in England yet, but the *Birmingham Education League* led by George Dixon delivers local work.

The Dutch *Tot 't Nut* tries to bring local groups and associations under one umbrella and helps new local branches to get started.

The Belgian *League* among the western neighbours is somewhat modeled on this. Karel Buls promotes courses and lectures based on what is already happening in Brussels, St Joost-ten-Node, Bruges, and Liège. However, differences are visible between local associations, such as the Brussels *Vlijtige Buitenlieden (Industrious Countrymen)* or the *Soirées populaires du Cercle d'Ouvriers (Popular evenings of the Workers' Circle)* of Baroness van Crombrugghe and the associations in Southern Belgium that are distancing themselves more from the Dutch *Tot 'tNut*. Here, young liberals from lower

social classes are working towards greater social equality. Frederick also told me that the *League* rather limits itself to persuading those belonging to the upper classes to recognise that the ascent up the social ladder by some children of the lower classes is legitimate. It is argued that it is necessary '*to offer elite intelligences the means to escape the obscurity from which they are struggling today.'* This is not necessarily about working on everyone's knowledge, but often just about the desire to offer opportunities to the most gifted from lower social classes. As the *League* writes according to what Frederick is telling me '*Even today, an active, intelligent, hardworking worker can reach a very high position.'*

Henri asks: "So you think that this whole democratising movement for education ultimately entails the danger of only shifting the gap between a small minority and a large majority, and that this gap doesn't just involve money, but also knowledge?"

"Yes," Johanna replies, "that risk certainly exists. The attitude of the current *Minister of Public Instruction* of the French Empire seems somewhat different to me. By emphasising general education since 1861 he ensures women no longer have to submit a special application to participate in the baccalaureate. He makes it possible for all girls to enrol in secondary education, and primary or elementary education is further expanded to everyone, thereby once again bringing the State into conflict with the Catholic Church. The latter sees its influence on education diminishing. Once again, the Emperor agrees more quickly than the *Corps Législatif* with the requirement to establish a girl's school in every municipality with more than 500 inhabitants and to introduce a certificate of primary education proving having terminated free primary education. He wants all schools to have a school library and makes geography and history compulsory in primary education, while reintroducing philosophy in secondary education alongside contemporary history, living languages, drawing, gymnastics, and music. I don't know if Minister Duruy is a member of the French *League of Education* but I

do know that the *League* now counts with more than 4,000 members and that the Freemasons are interested, that much is clear from what you can read, including in Le Monde Maçonnique."
Henri thinks for a moment and then says: "So you see a different approach in the French and Belgian government? You think the French place less emphasis on selecting gifted working-class children and more on a greater general knowledge of the entire population, rich and poor? Isn't that a bit utopian?"
Johanna smiles: "Perhaps. But in the meantime it's nice to know that the *Education and Recreation Magazine* just received the Montyon Prize from the Académie Française as a reward for her commitment to spreading knowledge and science."
A few days later, Johanna receives a short message from Frederick informing her that Brussels is almost completely abandoning the Lancaster schools with their mutual education, which were considered model schools ten years earlier. Is there more money now, and can more teachers be employed, Johanna wonders. And what will the replacement of mutual education with simultaneous education entail if social mobility through education is maintained? Is that a good thing for everyone? Or is individualism on the rise here?

Spring is in the air. Frederick can feel it. Or is he just sensing spring in his head? He's twenty-three, and today, March 14th, he's on the train from Liège to Herbesthal. A friend picks him up there to drive to Kelmis together. Easter is still almost a month away, but he had a good reason to ask the director of the Liège high school for special leave. Tomorrow, Annie Dehaan turns eighteen. It's been clear for over a year now that she feels the same love for him as he does for her, and tomorrow he wants to officially propose to her and her father. He's carefully planned it with Johanna. They'll celebrate Annie's birthday at the farm, to which, of course, her father and a few close friends have been invited. Frederick knows

Annie will say yes, but he's still quite nervous. Will he be able to control his nerves? Will he start stuttering? In Liège, he bought a simple ring that will accompany his engagement proposal. He's talked about this at length with Johanna as well. Both know that Annie, like herself, enjoys simple things. But he's primarily concerned with pleasing her father and making it clear his feelings are serious. After all, he's six years older and a lower secondary school teacher. He wants to reassure that that he's not simply considering Annie a future housewife. He knows she is as committed to workers' causes as he is, and he wants to support her in her work for and with the factory women. He's discussed it with Isabelle Gatti, and he believes Liège will be a good environment for Annie to further her education and delve into socialist proposals regarding workers' mutual insurance companies, healthcare, and the right to education for children. There's more than enough work to be done. Working-class families need to learn the importance of education and training, but they also need to learn to organize themselves. He knows that there are considerable problems with truancy in Belgium, just as in neighbouring Netherlands. Poor children simply stay away from school as soon as their families think they need to use them to increase their income. This is particularly noticeable in rural village schools. In the yearbook for primary education in the Netherlands, he even read a proposal to be realistic and adjust school hours to reflect periods when children are not required to skip school. Schedules and calendars would have to be adjusted accordingly.

But first, there's Annie's birthday… Around noon, she and her father arrive at the farmhouse. Annie asks Frederick if he'd like to visit the barn with her and her father. They show her the old miner where they often worked together, eight years ago now, when Frederick came to help her with her writing and reading. And then Annie shows her father what else she learned with Johanna before she started working as a nanny for her current employer. The three of

them walk quietly back to the farmhouse. As often occurs, Frederick is captivated by Annie's father's stories. Today, he tells him about the miner's lamp that protects the miners from dangerous gases and explosions. Frederick knows he's talking about Davy's lamp, the researcher Faraday once worked with. Meanwhile, their friends have taken their seats in the spacious living room. Frederick asks for some silence and stands between Annie and her father.

Then he says: "It's Annie's birthday today. I'm happy to celebrate her birthday with you. But Annie is a very special person to me. Through her" —and here Frederick looks at Annie's father— "I've learned a lot about the lives of miners and workers. Because of Annie, I knew quite clearly what my work would be: through her questions and her comments, she showed me how important public, free schools are for all girls and boys from all backgrounds. Thanks to my conversations with her, I know how important it is to guide all children and young people to acquire as much knowledge as possible. Since I live in Liège, every letter from Annie, every conversation with her, is an incentive for more dialogue, for more conversations with my students, with their parents, with those who are willing to make every library a people's library. Annie constantly stimulates me. Annie's company has become essential for me. During our long conversations and through Annie's letters, it's become clear to me that I apparently also stimulate Annie in her thinking, in her work, in her being. So — and here Frederick looks again at Annie's father — I won't hide the fact that I've begun probing whether I might venture to ask Annie if I could announce the step we're about to take. I've already spoken to you about it. And now, dear friends, dear parents too, I can tell you that Annie and I are so incredibly happy to announce our engagement to you." Frederick takes Annie by the hand and continues: "I tried as best I could to fulfil what you told me a few weeks ago. We're making our engagement public today, on your eighteenth birthday, and we're sealing it with this simple ring I'm offering you." Frederick then

hands the ring he had engraved in Liège to Annie, who slips it on her finger. They embrace, after which Annie's father also embraces Frederick, and Annie embraces Frederick's parents. The rest of the day passes peacefully, at the table and in the yard.

***

We are over a year later. Henrietta Swan Lewitt is born in Lancaster, Massachusetts. She would later become a major figure in the deaf community and in astronomy.

Jules Verne still contributes to the magazine *Education and Recreation.* He publishes *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.* In this he makes Professor Anorax say he is going through *Servants of the Stomach* by Jean Macé. In a rather subtle way, he wants to draw attention once again to the fact that formal primary education does little to disseminate scientific knowledge. It's no coincidence that Jean Macé's interlocutor in this book is a girl to whom he explains the workings of various systems of the human body, but also elaborates on other topics such as Newton's laws.

Frederick travels back and forth between Liège and Kelmis, and Annie has already been to the city a few times with Johanna. Frederick recently exchanged his two-room apartment for a more spacious house. The wedding is scheduled for early 1870.

Mother and son continue to follow the National Education Leagues and include Annie in their discussions about them. After all, discussing the expansion of education and its content also perpetuates the debate about how governments facilitate or hinder general access to knowledge and science. Frederick and Johanna often view the issue through an educational lens, while Annie usually sees the societal relations reflected in it. That's why she finds the work of Macé and Verne fascinating.

"I recently read an article about Portugal," says Johanna. "I suspect that interest there in general education was short-lived. The Marvila Normal School is closing after training only 91 teachers. Yet, an

official report mentions appreciation for the school and… *it cannot be denied that student teachers have qualified there with recognised merit, many of whom are already teaching with commendable success*'. According to my information, the training program will be significantly reduced, while practical training will also be reduced. When asked why, the laconic answer is '*to train primary school teachers, the new system is more than sufficient'*. I think people want to train more teachers in less time and align simultaneous teaching with instruction. Moreover, the Castilho reading method is still a thorn in the side not only of decision-makers but also of the teachers themselves."

"Here in Belgium," Frederick begins, "the number of qualified teachers is increasing. Five years ago, just over a third had a diploma; now it's about half."

"And does that really mean anything?" Annie asks. "I understand Johanna isn't actually a qualified teacher, and yet she's the best teacher I've ever had." She laughs. "I won't even mention you. You're qualified, and besides, I don't want to make you blush in front of your mother." At which point, Frederick, of course, immediately blushes.

"You're right," says Johanna, pretending not to notice Frederick's embarrassment. "But I also heard in the *League* that more effort is currently being made to develop adult schools. Until recently, the initiative was left to anyone. Parishes, groups of teachers, and even patrons established such schools at their own discretion. For the past three years, the State has also intervened, often through public municipal schools. I think that's a good thing for the working class. Three years ago, there were just over 1,200 adult schools, mostly non-public, mainly in West and East Flanders. Today, that number has more than doubled, and most institutions are municipal schools."

Annie nods: "We just have to ask ourselves if those who want to attend such a school actually have the time to do so. I don't know

much about the lives of fishermen and farmers, but I know a great deal about the lives of factory workers and miners. Do they still have the time and inclination to go to such a school after their day's work, or even on Sundays?"
"Right," Frederick agrees. "And you'll hear everywhere that today anyone who wants so, can go to school. After that, it's easy to explain that workers, now that they have the opportunity, don't want to enrol in an adult school, without questioning the patronage." He continues: "Something else. Karel Buls told me that in England and Wales the *National Education League* was just founded. Birmingham was, in a sense, a kind of prototype. George Dixon, Jesse Collins, and the nonconformist Joseph Chamberlain were the pioneers. The aim of the *League* is to advocate for a national system that provides quality education for every child in the country. Local authorities are involved and receive government subsidies when needed. With such subsidies, schools are subject to government inspection. They must be non-sectarian and free. Once such a school exists, the local authority can compel to attend children who don't attend school elsewhere.
"You don't say anything about what will be learned in such a school," Annie notes.
Frederick replies: "That's right, I couldn't find anything about the content yet."

During another visit by both women to Liège, Frederick tells that he heard the following advice from a primary school teacher: '*Take great interest in the children's work and all their circumstances… especially with the poor children… they easily feel inferior compared to the more affluent children… they are the ones who are most likely to stay away. The teacher must especially keep an eye on those who straggle and help them doubly.'* Annie notes that this is precisely what Johanna and Carine do at Children's Republic at the barn. She asks if there's a direct link between being poor and straggle. Johanna

believes it's more of an indirect one. Of course, children who stay away from school are more likely to have a harder time getting back on track later. But this is primarily due to the simultaneous education system that's being introduced almost everywhere for economic reasons. "Mind you", Johanna adds, "mutual education also followed a specific pattern, but the transition from one level to the next didn't have to happen simultaneously."

Annie thinks for a moment and then says: "So the term "straggling" is actually misleading. If a rhythm is imposed from outside, where everyone has to learn the same thing at a certain time, then it's obvious that anyone who isn't there at a certain moment will struggle to learn that particular subject."

Frederick nods: "Take away the simultaneous character, and you could say there are no stragglers anymore."

Johanna then says: "This brings us to the essence of the role of teachers as facilitators. In that sense I agree with what your colleague said, Frederick. I would just phrase it differently."

Frederick nods: "Yes. And I fear that the whole system of simultaneous education is going to make things difficult for quite a few children. If even a well-intentioned comment uses the term *straggler* you can already predict that we will have students of different kinds. I can already predict that for certain individuals, this disadvantage will become a natural phenomenon specific to the poor, just as people said, and still say, of Black slaves are less gifted because they are a different species."

Johanna nods and changes the subject. She and Annie learned on the train that the pressure on the Belgian government to build a railway line from Montzen to Herbesthal or Welkenraedt was finally paying off. The line is promised to be operational before the end of the year. Although it's primarily the mine director of Plombières who carries the weight, this also gives more clout to *Vieille-Montagne* and it is now really only a matter of time before Kelmis will have its own station.

“An international or a national connection?” jokes Frederick.
“Just laugh,” says Johanna. “Your father recently saw workers replacing the wooden boundary markers of Free Moresnet with basalt ones. As far as we’re concerned, that independent state is not far off!”
Both women also mention that the Belgian railways now run workers’ trains to factory sites and mining areas, offering cheap fares for workers traveling back and forth between home and work. Annie notes: “It seems that employers and the government found a solution to address the labour shortage in certain areas without having to invest in new working-class housing. I do know that those neighbourhoods, and especially the ‘*coron’* are not always the most pleasant places to live. But this just seems beautiful: ‘*stay where you live and take the train to and from your workplace’*. Meanwhile, people are easily away from home for more to two hours.”
Although war looms again, Frederick and Annie decide not to postpone their wedding any longer. They settle in Liège, hoping that the deteriorating relations between France and Prussia will not lead to the conscription of the young men of Moresnet. Frederick still has no recognised nationality, and since 1866, Prussia had been exerting increasing pressure on Belgium to divide Free Moresnet between them once and for all.
Mid-July war finally arrive. Emperors and kings have once again pushed matters to the limit to legitimise the act. This time, Bismarck had so enraged Napoleon III and the French parliament that they declared war on Prussia in France’s name. It will have disastrous consequences for Napoleon III himself, while the conflict once again inflicts enormous suffering on the already struggling population. But Frederick and the other young men born in Kelmis can’t avoid to show their joy at the fact that the Belgian government is not following through on the preparatory agreements of 1866. Now the Prussians are busy with the French, they act as if nothing had happened.

Frederick and Annie, however, are following with some concern something else, that is the developments of a kind of new crusade by the Catholic authorities. The Congresses of Mechelen, organised by the church authorities, quickly reveal that not all Catholics share the same views on the power relations within the Belgian state. There is a small but active group of Ultramontanes who hold a theocratic view and would like to amend the constitution accordingly. Then there are the moderate Ultramontanes who accept the constitution as long as it is interpreted according to strict Catholic tradition. And then there are the liberal Catholics who endorse the constitution as long as it gives the church sufficient leeway. This third group, which, despite everything, is the most open to dialogue, has little opportunity to make its ideas known. The Ultramontanes have a firm grip on the instruments of popular education, including the press and Sunday schools. The publication in 1864 of the encyclical *Quanta Cura* warning against errors, including liberalism and socialism, was of course primarily directed at France. Yet, this position also gained traction in Belgium, and the proclamation of Papal Infallibility proved to be a tool in the fight against liberalism. Frederick seriously questioned this infallibility when it apparently gave free rein to that section of the clergy with a clear thirst for power to cast suspicion on anyone who wanted to improve the lot of the working class. The aristocrats stirred, and as Frederick's ancestor Dieudonné heard long ago, they kept firm on the adage *God wanted the Estates.* Meanwhile, general education, not governed by the Catholic Church, continues to struggle. The relevant ministers, usually those of the Interior, are told that although simultaneous education is becoming increasingly widespread, it isn't really necessary. A combination with mutual education is perfectly possible. This is the solution, they say, when the local administration doesn't want to invest in a teaching assistant. Moreover, they continue, it involves deploying older, more capable students, which has nothing to do with Lancaster

education. Frederick and Annie find it all rather hypocritical. At first glance, the proposal seems somewhat reminiscent of the collaboration Frederick's mother envisions and which was also encouraged by his great-great-grandparents in Oostende. But, says Annie, that's not the case at all in practice. She visited recently a "mixed" school where partitions separate the girls from the boys, and at the back of the classroom there's room for another twelve students. Here, the less gifted students sit under supervision next to those being punished. Naturally, the most advanced students sit together at the front of the class. This type of classroom arrangement, officially called a tripartite arrangement, is very popular in many smaller schools.
Universal education, free, for everyone. The flag covers many meanings… even in Great Britain, proposals implemented by liberals are not immediately having the desired effect.The *Elementary Education Act* which came into force at the beginning of this year under pressure from the *National Education League* should provide primary education for all children aged 5 to 12 in England and Wales, but it is already clear that it may take many years to fulfil this legal obligation.

Frederick and Annie can't preview how many people will be born in the next quarter of the century who will later play a significant role in shaping a specific, systematic approach to compulsory education. One could say that they will give the more structured collaboration that has existed outside of school since time immemorial a form of education that aligns quite closely with the efforts and ideas of Frederick's ancestors.
But today, the day after the birth of Maria Montessori, who would later become a major figure in the education of young children, the French have other things on their minds than general education. "Their" Emperor Napoleon III has been captured by the Prussian commando after his army lost the Battle of Sedan. Paris is in

turmoil. The Empress flees the country to Great Britain with the help of her dentist. Since the imperial regime doesn't know how to respond to Napoleon's imprisonment, several representatives, including Leon Gambetta, take the initiative to declare the Republic from Paris City Hall. A provisional government for National Defence is quickly formed, which continues the war against Prussia.
In one of the states of the Prussian-led German confederation, Paul Geheeb is born on October 10. He would later be said to have advocated a new humanism as an educator in a society torn by violence.

On March 12, 1871, the railway connecting Kelmis to Moresnet was completed. You can travel by train from Liège to Welkenraedt and from there via Moresnet to Kelmis. King Leopold II had quite skilfully kept Belgium out of the Franco-Prussian War, allowing the government to continue working on the country's modernisation. In doing so, they met the mining industry's proposals to provide a railway line even in a disputed area! In Kelmis, *Vieille-Montagne* stands in for the station building. Furthermore, the King has ambitious projects in his own country. He wants to turn Oostende into an international seaside resort, have wishes to transform Brussels into a meeting place for intellectuals, and he also has a very egocentric desire to become a true ruler of his own territory, if not in Belgium, then somewhere in Africa…
Frederick and Annie take advantage of the new train service as soon as they can. They plan to spend the summer in Kelmis, and in early July they move in with Frederick's parents, where Annie's father is now also permanently residing.
On a July evening, Ovide Decroly was born in Ronse. Far away, Henri and Johanna gather a group of friends and acquaintances from Kelmis at their home. Wilhelm Molly is also a guest. He had recently returned from his second call-up as a medical officer in the Prussian army. Deeply affected by all the suffering he witnessed, he

offered his opinion on bringing people together across borders. He again discusses the purpose of the Geneva Convention for the protection of war wounded. He also believes it is finally time for Neutral or Free Moresnet to gain full autonomy from both Belgium and the German Empire.

The conversation takes a new turn when Carine's husband brings up the spring events in Paris: "The French capital has suffered another bad period. You've probably read that after Napoleon's prison, a republic was once again proclaimed. The bourgeoisie quickly took control and placed the elderly Adolphe Thiers at the head of the provisional government. In Paris, living conditions are dire for the working people, and the followers of Auguste Blanqui want to make banks, railways, and insurance companies public property. When Thiers's republican government poses as a defender of the bourgeois property owners, Blanqui's supporters, Proudhon socialists, anarchists, and old Jacobins set up a city council representing more than half of the primarily poor Parisians. Throughout April, the political organisation of Paris seems to herald a new kind of republic. The leaders declare: '*The Communal Revolution, begun by the popular initiative of March 18, inaugurates a new era of experimental, positive, scientific politics. It is the end of the old governmental and clerical world, of militarism, of civil service, of exploitation, of profiteering, of monopolies, of privileges, to which the proletariat owes its serfdom, the Fatherland its misfortunes and disasters.'* Paris is being governed as if all of France will soon come under this new government."

Carine adds: "That means that education is also being addressed. Many teachers are fleeing Paris to Versailles, where the Thiers government is staying. But look, the education reform is once again coming from a socialist from a wealthy background. I'm talking about Éduard Vaillant, whom some of you may know. He was closely associated with the *International Association of Workers.* He developed a proposal for liberal education for all girls and boys,

with religious instruction prohibited. Just before the end of the Paris City Council uprising, a women's committee was formed to examine the content of girls' education. But then, during a bloody week, the Thiers government put an end to the uprising, and our friend Vaillant disappeared to England.

"Our friend?" Johanna asks, laughing. "If I'm right, Vaillant's proposal doesn't go much further than the bourgeois socialists' proposals. Fröbel is probably among the enemies, and probably no one has heard of Diesterweg."

"I can't tell you anything about that," Carine's husband replies.

Frederick then says: "Of course, nothing came of this whole proposal, and the school structure of the Second Empire remained virtually unchanged. What I recently read in the *League* is that a petition is in the making with the cooperation of the press."

In September the petition Frederick was talking about will be released under the name *Mouvement national du sou contre l'ignorance (National Movement of the Penny Against Ignorance)* for free, public, and compulsory liberal education. The support is very large, which will soon lead to a new campaign to keep French public schools permanently free of religion.

"Yet, I think it's too simplistic to always attribute all evil solely to religion," Annie notes. "As a result of the prevailing ignorance, the church, religion, priests, and high-ranking church leaders are all tarred with the same brush, and that seems unfair to me, considering the many priests who are genuinely committed to improving the plight of working people. They are also sidelined by the church leadership."

"Here, among us, I think everyone knows we need to make this distinction," Johanna replies. "The problem is that every time a leader takes the position that State and Church must remain separate, church leaders, nostalgic for the old orders, do everything they can to regain control. Because it's about power, not about religion. And moreover, people confuse general education for the

dissemination of scientific knowledge with evangelistic work. The former is a belated attempt to teach an ignorant population about the ever-increasing knowledge of nature and humanity, and about the consequences for our society; the latter is a task for those who feel called to support those who ask for it in their religious experience."

"I'd like to comment on that, Johanna," remarks a young man who is also present at the request of Henri and the innkeeper. "I haven't been away from London long, and I can tell you that the school should be able to deal with Darwin's further publications, about which, among other things, the conservative church leaders who supervise free schools are spreading many false rumours. Look, with his *Fertilisation of Orchids* ten years ago, Darwin explained the relationship between orchid species and certain moths that pollinate them. Across the generations, we see how some flowers are more easily accessible for pollination by the moths than others. This explains quite well how, in a given context, selection is sexually determined. More easily accessible flowers are more easily pollinated, and thus those plants benefit over the others to produce a new generation of plants. This has nothing to do with spiritualism or creation, but with evolution. Now, there's a whole controversy going on because Darwin supports Lyell and Huxley. The former has already pushed the origins of humans back to very early pre-biblical times, while the latter demonstrates that, strictly anatomically speaking, humans should be classified zoologically among the apes. Darwin published in February *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, demonstrating the continuity of physical and mental traits. He explains how reproduction transmits traits and how those traits adapt to the environment, emphasising that all humans belong to just one species."

"And yet," Henri notes, "even this scientist who conducted this research is not immune to what is so often claimed in our white world. I read that even he acknowledges a racial hierarchy, with

whites being superior, immediately after he states that there is only one species of human beings."

In the coming years, travel became increasingly smoother thanks to the railways. The *Gemmenischer* tunnel is located near Kelmis. As a result, there are now two lines connecting Aachen to southeastern Belgium, facilitating both freight and passenger transport for the residents of Moresnet. And thanks to the local railway line, the administrator of *Vieille-Montagne* considers a connection to the telegraphic network. This has been expanding steadily along the railway lines since 1850. From then one could easily send messages from Oostende to Verviers, via Mechelen, Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, and Liège. A year later, one could reach Paris via Brussels and Quiévrain, and Aachen and the rest of Prussia via Verviers. As soon as Middelkerke was connected to Dover by submarine cable in the summer of 1853, one could also reach London telegraphically. Sending a message back then was still an expensive undertaking, but now, twenty years later, almost all of Western Europe is connected, and a telegraphic message has become much less expensive.

Nowadays, the railways often run trains with sleeper cars. This way, it is possible to travel from Oostende to Berlin, for example, while spending a peaceful night in the moving train. This leads Frederick to say that the next generation might not hesitate to travel abroad bringing — who knows — *Grand Tour* within reach not only of those with more means, but also of less affluent families. Johanna and Annie believe trains will bring people closer together.

Johanna even says one evening: "With easy train connections and with an expanding transfer of knowledge, we can perhaps begin to hope that humanism and knowledge will prevail over nationalistic hatreds and ignorance."

Henri isn't so optimistic: "In recent decades, we've seen how difficult it is for the *International Workers' Association* and the

network of *leagues* promoting education to weaken or change the authoritarian tendencies of those in power, to counteract national sentiments that quickly turn into belligerents. Perhaps we'll one day get as far as your mother hopes, Frederick, but I fear it won't be your eventual grandchildren who will enjoy this yet…"
Frederick nods. "Yes, it's slow and difficult. Just a few years ago, we were talking about how the liberals in Portugal wanted to improve public schools and introduce a more efficient reading method. Well, according to the chronicle '*As Farpas*' by two Portuguese writers, Queiroz and Ortigão, there are almost no decent schools today, let alone decent education. Just last year, they wrote: '*The school itself is another disorganisation. Except for the mostly still-functional buildings left by Count Ferreira, all the other classrooms are mostly a dark variation between a barn and a corral. No space, no cleanliness, no order, no light, no air. Nothing makes studying as hard as the ugliness of school.*' In that respect, it seems as if the infrastructure for getting around is in better shape than the infrastructure for developing. I think capital plays a role in that as well."

In the year of Eduard Claparède's birth, Frederick writes a review of Dutch Calvinist *Pedagogical Contributions* to publish in a magazine recommended by the *League*. His text, which he first discussed with Johanna and Annie, goes as follows:

> *Pedagogical contributions or pedagogical guidelines?*
> *With this short text I attempt to reflect on the 1st year of the publication* Pedagogical Contributions *by J. P. Schaberg, J. Smelik, W. F. Golterman, F. Ruimischeid, and H. Eerdbeek. The work begins with an introduction to Rousseau's educational theory. According to the authors, it is then divided into contributions on the history of education and teaching, teacher training, the practical work of teaching, and a number of book reviews. These contributions are not included in a specific order, but alternate, so it is not always clear what a particular article is about. But this is*

not so bad, especially since the authors address each of the main groups. For example, they state: In the first main group, attention can be focused on the Netherlands and its colonies, on foreign countries, on school regulations, on unpublished or lesser-known documents concerning education, on methods, teaching materials, biographies of schoolmen, etc. The second group then discusses teacher training colleges and biblical questions, the third discusses work in schools. The book reviews are not critical treatments, but rather an overview of available resources.

Of course, the inclusion of biblical questions in the entire collection of contributions on education indicates that we are probably not dealing with those who advocate public education separated from the church. The introductory text on Rousseau further reinforces the impression that we are dealing with an interpretative work, not an analytical one.

*The second sentence of that text sets the tone: '*The highest and noblest are passed over: the superficial and criminal are crowned by the world'. *This is the objection raised by the fact that in Geneva, 'the city of Calvin,' a statue of Jean-Jacques Rousseau stands in a central location, and not a Calvin's one. Rousseau himself is said to have led a despicable life. His method was supposedly an absence of method, and according to the author, the good ideas Rousseau puts forward were largely borrowed from Comenius and Ratke. An attempt is made to place Rousseau in his time to understand why he portrays children as unspoiled and pure, later corrupted by society. Doubts are raised, as many educators do today, about Rousseau's suggestion that children should be given full initiative and that they should not be taught but given the opportunity to gain experience, when he speaks of the third phase of education. Naturally, there are reservations about the remark that a child under eighteen should not hear anything about religion. One of the conclusions is that in the midst of the miserable and immoral social conditions in which*

*he lived, the good in him is that he pointed to nature, '*how ever wrong his view of nature may have been'. *The author ends with '*But for the rest, Rousseau, with the many and most dangerous errors he harbours, is a striking proof of the truth of the saying: '*They have rejected God's Word, what wisdom would they have?'* In his case one can, as it were, grasp it with one's hand, that everything would have been better with him if he had sincerely confessed the Christ of God'. *This seems to me to be a theological counterargument and not a pedagogical consideration or contribution.*

*It's interesting to read the contributions about Pestalozzi after this. The tone is set in '*Not as brilliant as the figure of Rousseau, with whose educational theory the first volume of these 'Contributions' began, nor as glorious may have been the appearance of Pestalozzi, yet he was infinitely nobler and greater than his compatriot and contemporary.' *It is argued that Pestalozzi wanted to be the protector of oppressed poverty and that his main goal was to stop the sources of misery in which he saw the poor sinking. I found no objections in the contributions to Pestalozzi's idea that the poor should be educated to cope with their poverty, so that they could be happy poor people. We recall his contributions in which he elaborated on the difficulties of poor orphans who had not been able to learn the harsh realities of their existence from an early age in the home environment, and how the school for the poor, which in his time also meant the school for orphans, warned against doing anything that would lead the orphans to fall into illusions. The vegetable garden is not there to bring about a return to nature, but to teach the poor how to provide for themselves. Pestalozzi may have cared for poor children, but the author of the review certainly did not make the analysis of the author of the social contract. I presume that idea is more in line with the pedagogical contributions of those who reason from a Calvinist perspective.*

The contribution on upbringing and education is interesting. The author rightly notes that there is a connection between the two concepts. I would also argue that upbringing (educare) and education (educere) complement each other. According to the author, this complementary activity should take place in one and the same place: the Christian School. As a humanist, I imagine this complementary activity occurring by offering children different environments: the nurturing home environment, the academic school environment, the humanistic environment that supports the family's moral framework, within or outside of a state-recognised religion. On this point, our opinions seem to diverge. Therefore, I propose the state school, which can introduce all children to the academic world; public libraries and public lectures, which can also support the nurturing home environment in the direction it wishes to take for the moral guidance of the youngest members of the family; and all state-recognised religious and philosophical institutions with an educational character that contribute to the moral framework of children and young people.

A contribution is the invitation to be part of a whole, a guideline advocates a unity in which only one's own truth is accepted as the real truth. The condemnation of tolerance towards dissenters can never serve as a basis for this. Maintaining a neutral stance towards all religions and philosophical movements does not mean being indifferent to any religion. It is the judicial and civil framework to create a place and time in which all philosophical movements can feel at home without feeling condemned by any other conviction. The condemnation of dissenters and other religions promotes the dispersal of the human species, not its harmonious coexistence. Therefore, I have my doubts about the passage in which the separation of church and state is interpreted as a separation between two spheres of life, between education and teaching, with 'Hence, the Modern State also bears the name of the Constitutional State. It guarantees freedom and security for

persons and property. It no longer concerns itself with the beliefs, confessions, convictions, opinions, or teachings of its citizens. It pays attention only to actions and also to the expressions of the former, insofar as these expressions could infringe on the freedom of others, whether they be compatriots or foreigners. The Church has long since condemned such tolerance and leniency towards those who think differently, and those who live and work, in the Papal Encyclical of 1832 and in the last Syllabus. It demands unity in all things, in every sphere of life, the unity that is brought about by the same faith, the faith of the Church, which must penetrate and inspire every person as much as possible.' *According to this author, no other moral education is possible than through the Christian church. The underlying homogenisation of thought is clear, it seems to me. And yet, a modern state is one that distances itself from any one religion and is not indifferent to the religious, philosophical, or moral well-being of the entire population that constitutes its nation, but rather embraces the multitude of institutions that can provide a moral framework.*

The author further discusses the ideals of what was once the French Revolution, which guided the constitutions of various modern European states. I agree with his idea that it's too simplistic to think that dancing and drinking around the tree of liberty is enough to establish a constitutional state. However, the excesses of rioters who incited poorly educated people to murder priests are not a new phenomenon. Even during the fratricidal war among Christians in the time of Comenius, there were rioters and poorly educated people who murdered dissenters. It is precisely these kinds of phenomena that can be placed in a historical context in a state school, without pointing fingers at one another, but by learning to understand how invective, violence, and a lack of communication only lead to new violence.

And that is why, as the author puts it, education is indeed the great

watchword for those who champion progress. Education, the support of wisdom. The neutral stance of the state school is an invitation to communication among all who attend it. This communication becomes even richer when education, supported by different attitudes to life, can be addressed. Not to convince one another, but to hear each other's attitudes, to understand their similarities and differences, and thus make it possible to live together without offending one another. Isn't that what morality and ethics stand for?

Perhaps it's difficult for many people to work out the relationship between education and upbringing if it's not developed in the same place with the children. This probably explains the demand for special education, Catholic or Protestant in our northern neighbours, Catholic in ours. Separating Church and State doesn't mean separating education and upbringing. Education (in the sense of schooling) and upbringing have always been two different aspects of raising children. But for a long time, education was only available to those who could afford it or were born for it. And in our region, this education was provided by those who had the time and means to study in abbeys, monasteries, and pensions. Perhaps this is why some people have developed the idea that education and upbringing are one. That can be meaningful for some. It's not in the nature of our times to mandate that this be the case for everyone. I believe that temples, whatever they may be, demonstrate their importance in society. However, I also believe that in today's evolving world, it's no longer possible to advocate for a single, hegemonic temple.

Among the book reviews, we find some useful tips for tackling math in primary school. Furthermore, a map of the Holy Land is recommended to accompany Biblical history in Christian schools. 'The Holy Land' is also the title of a reader for Christian schools and families, which, according to the author, is indispensable for learning to read Holy Scripture judiciously.

My final remark is that this volume of Pedagogical Contributions strikes me as a solid set of pedagogical guidelines for those working in Dutch Special Education, say, Calvinist Education. They opt for clarification, for providing a specific direction for how education should be approached here. I hope this clarification doesn't lead to less tolerant attitudes among teachers and students toward those who think differently, who are protected by the Modern State in the same way as those who think along with them.

Frederick discusses his article with Thomas Braun, who teaches pedagogy at the Nivelles Normal School where he previously studied. Thomas tells him that he is very cautious in how he addresses the proponents of special religious schools, but that he understands that caution. He has just completed research on the state of municipal primary education in Brussels and also claims to exercise the necessary caution in framing his criticism. For example, he mentions school No. 8 for girls, describing the buildings, furniture, and resources as a model for any school, the likes of which cannot be found even abroad. This allows him to launch what he calls his more political criticism of the city teacher training program, which lacks model lessons or adequate guidance, as well as the other, poorly maintained schools with overcrowded classrooms and few subjects taught. This ultimately leads him to point out the main flaw: the children are not taught in their native Flemish language.

Braun generally praises the new furniture and equipment coming from America and on display at the World's Fair in Vienna, where the Americans are present now the Civil War is finally over. A model classroom has been set up there. It features the American school desk already in use at the Brussels girls' school: a two-seater with a work table attached to the back for the next desk. The black sphere that serves as a round board, on which students can draw maps of the continents and oceans, thus obtaining a more accurate

representation than on a flat board, also receives praise. Opinions are divided on the representation of the planetary system. The off-scale representation of the sun and the Earth could certainly mislead students, and the entire model seems too expensive to explain phenomena like day and night. But Thomas Braun confines himself to his observations about the Brussels municipal schools.

When Frederick returns home that evening after his visit to Thomas Braun, Annie awaits him excitedly: the moment has arrived. She is certain she is pregnant. Frederick immediately sends a telegram to Kelmis announcing the big event. Johanna then writes to him to say that if they agree, the birth can take place at Frederick's parents' house. She has already informed Wilhelm Molly.

During Annie's pregnancy, the young couple usually spends their evenings at home. Annie reads essays and pamphlets she receives from the remaining members of the *International Workers' Association*, including the book *De l'organisation des services publics dans la société future: Réponse aux critiques (On the organisation of public services in the future society: Response to criticisms)* by César Depaepe. She knows that this champion of universal education always tried to keep the *International* alive by bringing followers of Marx and anarchists into dialogue, but that this was no longer possible after the sectional congresses in London and The Hague. Karl Marx seems to be definitively going his own way and apparently has difficulty reaching agreements that can maintain broad unity. It increasingly seems there no real will in the *International Workers' Association* to sit down together and learn to work together from divergent positions. As always, Annie thinks, this has a lot to do with the personalities of the leading figures and their relationships with power structures. She reflects on the most recent civil war in France, in which a segment of the population of the Parisian municipality fought against the Thiers government.

Marx says that the organisation of this uprising encompasses all the elements of what he considers a phase in a revolutionary process and calls the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. According to him, this phase is necessary, and the Paris uprising can teach us more about how to organize it to avoid a premature end, as happened there. Her Blanquist friends support this idea, demonstrating that when a small group causes a coup d'état or a revolutionary moment, that same small group must establish a dictatorship that will have to educate the people to adopt a new attitude to life. According to her anarchist friends, such a notion is nonsense, and they quote Bakunin, who supposedly said that even the most radical revolutionary placed on the throne of all Russias or given dictatorial power would, within a year, be worse than the Tsar himself. And despite the fact that the *International* says, '*That one should not think that we want to attack the democratic government in favour of the monarchy. The most flawed democratic republic is a thousand times more valuable than the most enlightened monarchy. The democratic regime is gradually involving the masses in public life.'* The anarchists cannot accept that the association would oblige all its sections to take political action within the State, as the Hague Congress wanted. They cling to the idea that general peace is only possible when the States are abolished and replaced by federations of autonomous communities.

When Annie talks about this with Frederick, he thinks of what he and his friends call '*the ideal teacher'*: someone who can help children not only by imparting knowledge using his familiar teaching methods, but also by supporting them and their parents in general family education. A teacher must therefore be able to easily adapt to their environment and certainly be able to speak the local dialect. He provides good children's literature and helps children understand the dangers of poor nutrition and alcoholism. He is active in evening and Sunday schools for adults, gives lectures, and helps organize leisure activities. Naturally, he actively fights against

child labor, including by providing moral support to industrialists and employers.

Frederick then talks about the newly established model school of the *League of Education,* of which Charles Buls is now director and where Alexis Sluys works. His main criticism is that these champions of general liberal education were seduced into operating outside the state system, and that their model school is therefore a school for paying students. But he has even more reservations. People talk about intuitive education, and he wonders if this means that teachers are constantly ready to engage in dialogue with the children and use guiding questions, so as not to leave them in the lurch with their intuition. He is also concerned when he sees how abandoning the deplorable mutual education that Lancaster advocated for economic reasons apparently leads inexorably to simultaneous education, with year groups as the only solution. He has doubts about the homogeneous willingness to learn of a group of 30 to 40 or more children lined up in American school desks.

Annie notes that just as the Lancaster proposal wasn't the solution, simultaneous education might not be either. She does point out that although truancy in Belgium has dropped from a third to a quarter of the expected school population over the past thirty years, one in two eleven-year-olds still barely knows how to read. Perhaps simultaneous education is a good way to get more children learning to read quickly.

Frederick has his doubts. He cites army numbers. It has been established that over the past twenty-five years, the number of literate conscripts has risen from about half to three-quarters of recruits. Conversely, slightly more than a third of conscripts now have a higher level of education, compared to slightly less than a third in 1850. More schools do not mean more in-depth general knowledge. But Frederick readily admits that this may not only be related to methods or models, but also, and perhaps primarily, to

the wide gap between the rich and the poor.

Oostende continues to expand. All the city walls have been removed, and new construction is increasingly moving towards Mariakerke, where the temporary royal chalet still stands. This is gradually being joined by large hotels on the sea wall, attracting more affluent citizens to the coast.
In Great Britain, too, coastal and rural areas are increasingly becoming holiday destinations for those living in the big cities. This is especially true for young Robert Baden-Powell, who spends his school holidays rowing, canoeing, and sailing with his brothers. During the school year, he learns to sneak and improvise meals while escaping from school into the nearby “forbidden woods”.

Frederick and Annie didn’t head for the coast, but for the forest. Annie left for Kelmis in mid-June, and Frederick followed her two weeks later. Annie was now heavily pregnant, and on July 5, 1875, a healthy daughter is born. She is given the name Jeanne and, following family tradition, was registered in Kelmis.
The first member of the new generation of the family, whose name evolved from Magister to Lesmeister and Lemaître to Teacher, spends quiet days between Kelmis and Liège. Frederick and Annie have plenty of time for their daughter. Annie has temporarily suspended her activities with female workers, which doesn’t mean she isn’t closely following in the organisation of the *caisses mutuelles (mutual funds)* as in Namur, with the hope of being able to set up similar mutual aid in Liège. Meanwhile, Frederick reads how in Portugal what was once the Castilho method is being given a second life now that João de Deus has renamed it *“Cartilha Maternal”*, which he wrote about in *A Arte da Leitura*: ‘*We have introduced the beginner to his great astonishment, to the mechanism of writing. He saw, more or less clearly sensed, the ingenuity of the man who, by studying the sounds that make up words, invented a sign for each sound, and then, since a word consists of such and such sounds,*

writes such signs for such and such sounds! But here the wonder is appropriate how this art, based on such a simple foundation, has been the martyrdom of so many innocents, and still, in the opinion of the masses, passes for a difficult science!' After this introduction, the author describes the *Cartilha Maternal*, which, starting in the second lesson, presents meaningful Portuguese word lists with the indicated letter to clarify the connection between sound and spelling. The first lesson serves to introduce the five vowels used in Portuguese.

The same issue of the magazine discusses the Delft system of simultaneous education. The headmaster of a school there quickly observed that all children of the same age in the same class demonstrate clear differences in learning ability. So, they speak of "fast ones" and "average ones", and in this system, they are divided into different classes. What Frederick finds surprising is that no one considers the artificial nature of this simultaneous education. "Can you really think," he asks Annie, "that all children learn to speak, walk, or use the toilet on the same day of their lives?" Annie laughs and thinks that many more forms of education will emerge now it's clear that it is impossible to appoint one teacher per family. But Frederick notes that there's little to laugh about in the meantime, when you read some testimonials, such as that of teacher Tassaert about his own time at a municipal school: '*So much crying, so much screaming, so much begging to stay home! It was as if our parents were going to jail us! In truth, school was no better than prison*.'

Frederick's father gave him some reading material about one of the Far Eastern countries Henri had been trying to gather information about for some time. In Korea, the defender of traditional Confucianism, Yu Insŏk, is said to have dismissed Western ideas of equality and freedom as barbaric. He is said to have argued as follows: '*As for heaven and earth, there are high and low ranks. As for all things under the sun, there are great and small sizes. As for mountains, there are high peaks and hills. As for water, there are ditches*

and oceans. How can they be equated? As for humans, there are differences between lord and subject, father and son, man and woman, older and younger, higher and lower, and noble and lowly. There are differences between wise and common, and wise and foolish. How can they be equated? As for Western laws, in a constitutional monarchy, there is the monarch and the subject. In a republic, there are presidents and vice-presidents. There are also upper and lower houses of parliament. Therefore, human equality will ultimately not be realised. Equality is nothing but disorder, and disorder is nothing but chaos. Freedom is nothing but indecency, and indecency is nothing but strife. The reason why the current world descends into violence and confusion is nothing but equality and freedom. Advocating equality and freedom incites a spirit of violence and strife, and such a spirit of violence and strife causes such events of violence and strife. If this is not stopped, humanity will eventually perish. The world would also collapse. Equality and freedom have, throughout history, been the worst thing ever conceived in the world. It only encourages people to be outspoken and to be profiteers. Why adopt this practice in China and Chosŏn?'

When Frederick talks about this with Annie, she thinks for a moment and then says: "Perhaps there's confusion about the idea of equality. Of course, there are differences between people, between men and women, between men themselves, and between women themselves. But equalising doesn't mean making tall people shorter and elongate short people. Making the laws equal for everyone, so that the poor don't have to compete with the rich, so that everyone can acquire all the knowledge they desire, so that everyone can divide their time between work and freedom, as they see fit—that seems to me to be the point. And perhaps the presidents and the lower and upper houses of parliament themselves are giving a rather distorted picture of Yu Insŏk. You could say he's hitting the nail on the head. Perhaps it would be good to ask your father if he also knows what Yu is proposing. A different form of equality and freedom, or maintaining a hierarchy familiar from before the

French Revolution. That's not clear to me when you read these words.

Meanwhile, far from Korea, but not far from Liège, Lodewijk Demeester was born in a castle farm near Tienen.

The battle for the school

By the end of 1878, the Teacher-Dehaan families were living together in Kelmis. Frederick and Annie had a second baby named Jean. Henri liked the sound of pronouncing his grandchildren's names together: *JeanneEtJean*. Annie noted that her mother-in-law's name, Johanna, clearly lives on in her descendants.

"Did you hear that King Leopold inaugurated a new Kursaal in Oostende?" Annie asks Johanna.
"Yes, now there might even be a real casino there. And with the British nearby, everything related to gambling will definitely take off. Meanwhile, there's also speculation about a horse racing track, I've heard," Johanna replies. "Furthermore, Leopold seems to have suddenly discovered state education in Belgium, as far as I can tell from last month's speech from the throne."
Frederick laughs. "Don't forget that Belgium is a constitutional monarchy. The Speech from the Throne is primarily a government declaration. With the victory of the liberals over the Catholics, there is now, for the first time since Belgium was formed a proper Ministry of Public Education. Frère-Orban has proposed Pierre Van Humbeeck for that position. It's certainly interesting that a separate ministry will now be created to deal with public education. But if you listen to the French liberals, it will probably mainly focus on instruction. I suspect that efforts will simply be made to separate general instruction from religious education. It seems to me that the government included some notoriously anticlerical Freemasons, but that doesn't mean they defend the ideals of the progressive liberals."
Johanna responds: "Yet it sounds beautiful in the throne speech: '*The intellectual culture of a people is more than ever, in the present time, the essential source of its prosperity*' and '*education provided at*

state expense must be placed under the direction and exclusive supervision of civil authority' This civil authority means that nosy people from the church are not wanted."

"I foresee a lot of discussion about this, Mother," Frederick believes. "I heard in the *League* a bill is in the making to amend the 1842 law with a clear reference to the constitutional separation of State and Church."

Annie responds: "I don't think public education itself is the main problem. The bourgeois who form the governments know little about the living conditions of the working class. I heard that this school year, eight out of ten non-paying students are still dropping out very quickly, compared to six out of ten paying students. I don't think it's just a school issue. The non-paying students are children of working families, and often there's no way to send them to school. When parents work twelve to fifteen hours and then have to travel to and from the factory, it quickly becomes clear that no one can ensure that the children, if they're not already sent to the factory, do or don't go to school. And even the paying, and therefore better-off, families apparently don't have enough control over their children. And why would a child go to a place where they're constantly threatened with punishment during the often tedious lessons?"

"Yet, nine out of ten qualified teachers work in the municipal schools," Frederick notes.

Annie looks at him: "Don't forget that many of them devote more hours to adult schools than to primary schools. These often replace daytime education. Despite the law, many working-class children under fifteen prefer to attend school here rather than daytime education. You remember our teacher friend who told us that in many adult school classes, including his, more than half the students are under fourteen. And about this, the *League* talks less than about keeping the church out of school…"

Johanna responds to what Annie said: "I completely agree with

Annie that the defenders of public education these days do so as a reaction against the Church's interference and not out of concern for the quality of education for the children of working people. Even the humanitarian aspects can be seen as a protection of the investment of capital. I recently read that a good school library serves not only to encourage children to read, but especially to bring books home for their parents to read or have read to them, so that time can be spent productively instead of giving in to drink. But don't adults jaded by work, more readily seek oblivion in a bottle of jenever than in edifying or imaginative reading material? We'll see what the Ministry of Public Education will achieve in the coming years."

"Meanwhile the Church seems to be stirring again in the Netherlands," Frederick continues. "There the *Christian National School Education* organised itself with a petition to the King in which signed parents declare that they prefer a school with a Bible to a public school without one. Yet, the King signed the law on public education in August."

"But what is the opposition to the law actually about?" asks Annie.

Johanna replies: "If I'm correct, it involves several points. First and foremost, there's an objection to the article that determines the construction and furnishing of classrooms and the number of children allowed in them, for public health reasons."

"And the Christian Council is against that?" Henri wonders.

Johanna explains: "That's mainly due to the existing special schools which in Belgium would be called free schools. They can't meet these requirements, and there's a fear that several buildings will close."

Annie sneers: "So we live with the Bible and let the children's health in God's hands?"

Johanna smiles: "That's a sharp remark, but yes, it has to do with preserving as many classrooms as possible so as not to jeopardise dogmatic teaching. But another point has to do with the training.

For example, in ten years, trainees will only be allowed to work as assistants and will no longer be allowed to teach independently. The government believes this improves the quality of education, but private schools see it as an additional financial burden."

Frederick jumps in and says: "In addition, the number of students per teacher is being reduced. That's also a significant improvement. Private schools aren't required to implement this; it's a rule for public schools."

"Then why are they against it?" asks Henri.

"Annie will immediately say this is perverse too," laughs Frederick, "but the reasoning goes something like this: while it's not mandatory, if public schools improve as a result of this measure, it might become harder to retain our audience. But we don't have the money to hire more teachers, so we'd be better off not having this rule in any school at all."

Johanna continues: "People are also unhappy about the role the law assigns to female teachers: they are supposed to teach the lowest grades. It's unclear whether the opposition is about women teaching the lowest grades or about the presence of female teachers in general."

Frederick concludes: "And then there's Article 33, which includes a penalty for anyone who doesn't refrain from teaching or permitting something that violates the respect owed to those who think differently. There's considerable protest against this, because it mandates neutrality, meaning that religious education limited to one specific religion is not permitted in public education."

Annie sighs: "So the underlying idea here is: public yes, but based on the most common religion."

"You could perhaps put it that way," Frederick replies, "but it is coherent for those who assume that there is only one truth for moral framing and that this truth is contained in the religion that the proponent also considers to be the only true one."

Henri notes: "You could say that this law represents a general

improvement for education and places higher demands on proponents of religious education, forcing adjustments that cost money. And that's unfair because it goes against a segment of the population."

Johanna looks at him in disbelief: "Do you mean what you're saying? Does this go against a segment of the population? Or does this go against those who stubbornly prevent the population from making its own choices and therefore want to preserve the education system they direct?"

Henri replies: "I'm just making a point. Should a democratic state provide resources so that leaders of any philosophical or religious persuasion can establish schools, or should those leaders find the resources themselves? Is the *Christian National School Education* protesting because it wants a law that also supports Anarchist Schools, Islamic Schools, and International Workers' Alliance Schools, or is it simply opposed to any education system not regulated by its Church and its representatives? In other words is it catering a majority that exists today and may not exist tomorrow or is it holding on to the mixing of State and Church within one single philosophical-religious framework?"

Annie listens attentively to Henri and then says: "What I understand from what you're saying is that with the separation of church and state, the teachings of a religion or any philosophical movement are simply kept out of public schools and left to whoever advocates that religion or movement. Is that realistic?"

Henri concludes: "I don't know if that's realistic today, but I think that a government made up of representatives of the people cannot imagine any other working model at this moment if it wants to continue to apply a tolerant principle of equality."

Far from Kelmis, the umpteenth short-lived reign of Portugal's constitutional monarchy once again requires all its diplomacy to haggle with the English and French over the terms slaves, slave

trade, abolition of slavery, and prohibition of slave trade. As always, moral positions clash with economic ones. Throughout Europe, not only governments but also a significant portion of scientific researchers continue to divide various human groups into hierarchically classified races. This creates the necessary loopholes for the continued use of slave labour to provide industrial enterprises with sometimes substantial profits. This will allow Leopold II, King of the Belgians, to slowly but surely gather all the arguments that, in a few years, will lead all European monarchs and leaders to make decisions in his favour during a conference that Bismarck will organize, also at his request.
Aside from international manoeuvring, successive Portuguese governments are attempting to further address education internally. One reform provides for the establishment of four first-class teacher Normal Schools: two in Lisbon (one for each gender) and two in Porto. These schools will serve to train teachers for elementary and complementary education, with training periods of two or three years, respectively. There will be ten second-class Normal Schools, one in each district capital. These schools may be mixed-sex and will train elementary schoolteachers. Meanwhile, there is a very limited network of public schools for boys. Girls can only attend a large network of unofficial schools for both genders, young and old. These include colleges, private citizen-run elementary education initiatives, as well as charity and solidarity schools, schools established by local authorities, sometimes even by association members, and evening or Sunday schools with itinerant teachers. Some action is urgently needed, as 80 percent of the population in Portugal is still illiterate.

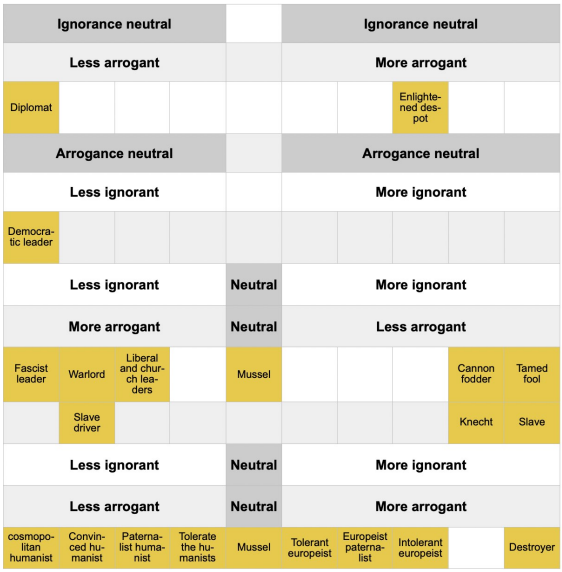
Johanna is 62 when she explains to her family and friends to see a parallel between the classification of chemical elements and a work of her great-grandparents. She had always kept their writings on ignorance and arrogance after she left Oostende and had long

reflected on what influences ignorance and what is influenced by ignorance.

The stories she heard about Faraday while living with her grandfather have always kept her interested in the progress of the natural sciences. She is therefore well acquainted with the various tables proposed by chemists over the past fifty years to arrange the elements. She finds the periodic systems of Dmitri Mendeleev and Julius Lothar Meyer particularly interesting because both present the elements in columns based on certain recurring properties. Mendeleev's table inspires her for two reasons. First, it leaves gaps in the system where as-yet-undiscovered elements can be accommodated. Second, it makes specific adjustments to the proposed arrangement to better group the elements into chemical families.

Furthermore, Johanna has, of course, dedicated her entire life to dialogue-based work methods to help young children emerge from ignorance and provide an education in which they learn to interact with each other, even when they are very different. This stands in stark contrast to what she sees and hears every time she discusses the educational policies of government leaders with family and friends, the influence of both church leaders and those who take an anti-clerical stance, and the lack of tolerance between these different groups. Incidentally, a kind of school war has broken out in Belgium this year. This has led Johanna to the category '*liberal and church leaders'* to be included in what she calls an ignarometric scale of human relationships categories, in the family of less ignorant and more arrogant.

And so, the year Albert Einstein and Adolphe Ferrière were born, she presents the following table:



(Authors' note: Among old papers, we found a printed black-and-white version. Larger coloured format available online.)

Frederick and Annie organize a meeting in Liège to give Johanna the opportunity to talk about her ignarometric scale. About forty people show up, mainly teachers. Johanna is overjoyed when she recognises her brother Leopold among the attendees. She hugs him warmly.

"These days you can inform someone quickly," laughs Frederick. "You just have to use the telegraph."

"Did you send my brother a telegram about this?" asks Johanna.

Leopold then said: "I did indeed receive two lines of text: '*Come over to Liège. Your sister is giving a lecture.*' Of course I was curious. Did you know, by the way that transition from telegraphy to the telephone has already been made?"

"Telephone?" asks Henri, "isn't that the idea of having a device that allows you to speak to someone remotely?"

"Exactly," Leopold replied. "And it's not just an idea. There's already a telephone line in Parliament, and you can use it to speak from one place to another, within the Parliament building."

"Perhaps you will arrange to be able to talk from Nivelles to Kelmis

through an adapted telegraph line," jokes Frederick.

During her presentation, Johanna draws a representation of her scale on the large board she has at her disposal. Frederick also arranged by a local printer, a friend of his who often prints pamphlets to a printed copy of the table on paper. Frederick wrote about the presentation a few days later:

Dear mother,

I'm so glad your presentation was a success. There was clearly a lot of interest in your ideas. As Leopold said, your open table is an invitation to reflect. We can look at what's happening around us and try to assess who we're dealing with. Is it a more or less arrogant person, a more or less ignorant person? Can we place them under what you've already included in the table? Do we propose a new type? Do we adapt an existing type? It leaves many possibilities open.

I also found the comments and the discussion that followed your presentation interesting regarding the danger of pigeonholing people. I think you made it very clear that you're not trying to establish a hierarchy, but to clarify who we're dealing with. Annie found that an interesting point. If you have two leaders who are not ignorant and arrogant, the chance of them reaching a peaceful compromise is slim, but if you have two ignorant and arrogant leaders, that chance is even smaller. One of my colleagues' remarks that imparting knowledge and emphasising learning to dialogue influences the bottom left corner of your table was interesting. I thought we can use your table to "read" educational practices. This not only leads to pleasant observations, like my colleague's. It also leads to the conclusion that leaders who are not ignorant but are arrogant can adapt the school system to produce followers who are not arrogant and ignorant. Ignorant people trained to be slaves… we've seen it many times in history.

Mother, I think it was inevitable that the second part of the conversation would focus primarily on the ongoing malaise in the Belgian education system. A malaise from which we are far from over, I think. Van Humbeeck's educational reform is clearly an

arrogant, anticlerical reaction against the arrogant, clerical attitude of conservative Catholic church leaders. I have no doubt about that. But I think the liberal government is only interested in shifting the power dynamics from church to non-church (and perhaps to Freemasons?). The struggle for a public school emancipated from the church doesn't, within the doctrinaire liberal ranks, seem to me to be a struggle for a school that generalises knowledge. Even the official teacher training colleges aren't necessarily Fröbel-minded. But what seems worse to me is the power struggle being waged by the conservative clergy, who see the new law as a 'loi malheur'. The clergy is boycotting municipal schools in an unprecedented manner by putting teachers and parents under ecclesiastical pressure to leave this public education system. For them, the constitutional freedom of education is Catholic education. They make that 'freedom' a necessary condition for the separation of church and state, where education is their business. In any case, you can hardly call it a tolerant attitude. I would even say the bishops are suddenly advocating revolutionary terror. And I don't really see how the anticlericals can take action against this smear campaign at this point. It seemed like a good idea to ask the Pope to help calm things down, but apparently things backfired. Still, I think the bishops are wrong. A public school in a secular state that is tolerant of different religions is a humanist proposal. A public school in which moral education is solely based on the precepts of the Catholic Church is a local and outdated interpretation of moral education. The world doesn't stop at the border between Belgium and the Netherlands or France, nor does it stop at the line beyond which there are no (or not yet any, or no longer any) Catholic schools. Of course, the current law reflects the logic of the doctrinaire liberals in power. Convinced that the clergy facilitates electoral fraud by acting as 'consultants', they want to limit the Church's influence everywhere. For primary education alone, this means that municipalities may not subsidise free schools, that teachers in municipal schools must hold a diploma from a State Normal School, that religious instruction is provided exclusively outside of

class hours and only at the express request of parents, and that the curriculum is subject to state-controlled programs and textbooks. It strongly resembles a 'counteroffensive' against the Catholic governments that have ruled for years.

It would be more useful to sharpen the thinking capacity of children and adults, but that is perhaps not the government's intention. This could result in a shrinking not only of the clerical support base, but also of the doctrinaire anticlericals. Because, and this is what I think right now, Mother, we are dealing here with two powerful groups from the bourgeoisie who want to secure their support. To guarantee the support of the ignorant population, the clericals have the church. The anticlerical bourgeoisie doesn't have such an institution. Too much thinking capacity in general could well give the workers' associations more power, Annie told me recently the anticlerical bourgeoisie won't like that either. An exclusively doctrinaire counteroffensive to turn the school into a kind of breeding ground for liberal ideas, might, on the other hand, benefit the clericals because essentially nothing is being done for the emancipation of the common people, who see the struggle passing them by.

The current law encourages the secularisation of education. This undermines the ideal of a mono-religious society the Catholic Church strives for. But it would be wrong to want to slide into another society where only anticlerical positions are pursued. I think the entire discussion on this subject that followed your presentation is a good illustration of how your table encourages people to reflect and engage in dialogue. How useful would that dialogue be in the official Normal Schools? Especially now the bishops are already organising themselves to convince Catholic parents to keep their children and young people out of official education and, with their interpretation of freedom of education, are establishing a Catholic educational network. Furthermore, the bishops refuse to hear about abolishing boarding schools for future teachers. But according to Minister Van Humbeeck, public teachers are government officials. A broad intellectual education is certainly necessary, he believes, but religious formation is not necessary for

the exercise of their office. Therefore, the boarding school, modeled on the seminary, loses its function. And Catholic leaders disapprove of this. They want to preserve the boarding school, in which religious education ensures cooperation between priest and teacher to maintain unity between education and upbringing.
In the meantime, I think we'd do well to continue to advocate for community libraries and community education associations. Even there, your table could be a good starting point for discussions, don't you think?
A sweet hug from your son
Frederick

Frederick and his family see great benefit in organising Communities that establish mutual benefit societies to provide mutual support, for health, education, and even funerals. Johanna agrees with her son that, without her knowing it, her Barn-school bears resemblance to what Robert Owen described some sixty years ago in *A New View of Society: Or, Essays on the Formation of Human Character Preparatory to the Development of a Plan for Gradually Ameliorating the Condition of Mankind.* These are thoughts that also regularly surface among certain groups that were part of the International Workingmen's Alliance and where the *phalenstère* also recall Saint-Simon and Fournier.

At the moment, it seems to be mainly factory workers who encourage each other to set up mutual societies within the communities or the groups they form, either formally or less formally. Sometimes these groups lead to new initiatives. This is the case in Lisbon, the same month that Johanna talks to her family about her ignarometric scale. There, tobacco worker Custódio Gomes, a member of the association *Fraternal Union of Tobacco Manufacturing Workers*, is said to have looking beyond the basic needs of the mutual insurance company: health and funerals. As an illiterate person, he regularly has newspaper titles read out to him. After a period of crisis that also affected tobacco workers, but which

no newspaper reported, he says: *If I could read and write, we would have had a newspaper long ago.*

Custódio Gomes presents his idea for a newspaper at a meeting of the Union, and another Custódio, Braz Pacheco and president of the Union, immediately supports him. Being a worker doesn't automatically make you a slave, is one of the starting points. That same evening, the proposal for publishing a newspaper is approved. The paper is named *A Voz do Operário*, *The Voice of the Worker*. The first issue of the newspaper will appear on October 11.

The wealthy European bourgeoisie is enjoying entirely different things. The direct train-boat-train connection between Brussels and London via the covered station at the port of Oostende is now operational, effectively connecting all the capitals and tourist destinations so sought after by tourists.

Annie is visiting the Borinage mining region. She is collecting stories about the lives of the workers, as part of her activities to mobilise workers or to assist them in their own mobilisation to establish mutual support communities and committees.

Her trip to the Borinage has a specific purpose. She's visiting *Frameries*. As the daughter of a former miner, whose mother lost her life in a mine fire, she quickly connects with the widows of the victims of the firedamp explosion that occurred there this spring. During one of these visits, she has a brief conversation with Vincent van Gogh, a 26-year-old lay preacher who guides the small local Protestant community of miners. Vincent lives in poor circumstances, according to him, because he identifies with his small flock. Originally from the Netherlands, he became a teacher in Ramsgate and then an assistant preacher in Isleworth. He tells Annie he was sent as a missionary to Petit-Wasmes after training in Laeken. He apparently absorbs the hardships of the miners so deeply that Annie feels his community sees him as a sufferer rather than a leader. He says he is deeply affected by the '*feverish, tired and emaciated*' appearance and the '*faces hollowed out by fatigue and*

premature aging'. He had even descended into the '*cursed pit*', as pit number 2 was called by the miners, around the time of the firedamp explosion, after which he tended the wounded. His resigned and depressed demeanour is also reflected in the drawings he shows Annie, which radiate the intensive poverty. But to many miners, he remains a stranger. Annie hears not resignation in the widows' testimonies, but defiance. That pit, where another 121 people were killed earlier this year, already had a bad reputation. In 1875, more than a hundred miners were killed there, and the pit had only just reopened after smaller explosions that killed several and injured dozens. When Annie asks why the men went back down, the answer is simple. For several years now, there has regularly been no work for anyone in the other pits, and so those without income felt compelled to descend that cursed pit. Yet she hears thanks and praise for the king and queen. They sponsored a charity party in the summer to raise money to send to the affected families. A party... Annie isn't the only one outraged. Shortly after that second, very deadly explosion, pressure came from various quarters on the mine operators to close that particular pit, as it was too dangerous. The *Chambre du travail (Chamber of Labour)* submits a petition to Parliament, supported by liberals Léon Defuisseaux and Paul Janson, but nothing helps. There is no inquiry, and the Parisian Rothschild group, owner of the Coal Company that operates the pit, has no intention of closing it. Annie hears from former marble miner Louis Bertrand that he wants to bring communities of workers together under one umbrella within the *Chamber of Labour* after he wrote about the industrial accidents following a visit to the region and dedicated the text to the Belgian miners. In Paris, it is said of the Borinage miners: '*if you speak of a slave, then there you certainly find one…'* A bitter commemorative medal bears the text '*The Catholic press collected millions for the Vatican beggar and barely a few thousand francs for the victims of the Agrappe*'.

Annie and Frederick assume that the intellectual discussions within the *International Workers Association* of the last ten years have not done much to address the need for working-class organisation. There are three trends: working through existing political structures; establishing independent social-democratic parties; and continuing to reject any political action through the creation of parties. In the Borinage, the latter trend is particularly prevalent. They rely on mutual insurance companies and local workers' associations.

In addition, Since the early 1870s, the Belgian branch of the *International Workers Association ,* that is the social-democratic movement has been in trouble. The contradictions between the major political movements are growing. In Flanders, people are relying on the German model to establish the social-democratic party and break with the section of the AIT (association internationale des travailleurs) that advocates action through existing political structures. In Brussels, too, there is a tendency to join the social-democratic movement en masse. In Wallonia — and especially in Verviers and the Borinage — people remain loyal to anarchism and revolution, rejecting political action and the formation of parties. When Frederick speaks about this in Brussels circles where a recent *Brabant Socialist Party* start to work with with a organisation founded in Ghent as the *Flemish Socialist Party*, then the answer is that Verviers and the Borinage are simply opposing the position that makes party-political action compulsory.

The couple sees analogies in the ongoing skirmishes between the various socialist groups and tendencies with the aggressive skirmishes between the various Christian-inspired churches.

"It seems that as soon as two people meet," Annie begins, "the conversation more easily leads to an aggressive dispute than to a discussion that lays the foundation for coexistence."

Frederick thinks for a moment and then says: "Is it my impression, or is it true that in every dispute there are always individuals or

groups who think about the exercise of power and that there are insoluble breaking points about that?"

Annie notes: "You could also argue that in these conversations, there's a group of people who want to seize power and impose their will on others, and on the other hand, those who want to share power without imposing their own will. Would the second group inevitably be held hostage by the first?"

"Hostage?"

"Yes, whoever in the discussion aims not at coexistence, but at victory, at imposing their will on the majority, will achieve it. Then democracy becomes the will of the majority, aggressively. We see this with the church authorities and doctrinaire liberals. Some of your father's friends who identify themselves as followers of Marx and Engels exhibit the same traits."

"But they don't have power, like church leaders do?"

"Oh, my naive teacher, are they not seizing power in the *International Workers Alliance?* So far, they haven't achieved much more than casting suspicion on anyone who thinks differently from them, but that's just a stepping stone. Talk to Karel Buls and Isabelle Gatti about it, if you like. There was a heated debate about this in Verviers after the failed attempts to revive the *International* with the reconciliation congress in Ghent."

"Verviers… If you want to extend our parallel, it seems that in Verviers you have a kind of schism like the one between Calvin and Luther. Here you have the recently deceased Bakunin on one side, Cafiero on the other, with James Guillaume trying to remain neutral."

"But don't you agree that despite their differences, they can more easily establish a basis for coexistence between those who think differently than those who want to seize political power in what they call a democratic representative system?"

"It seems more promising, yes. I'm just worried about the possibility that defence will become offence here too, with all means justified,

even murder and manslaughter.
And yet, I'd rather sit at the table with those who ultimately propose basic communities where cooperation plays a significant role and ownership is avoided, than those who once again advocate a model in which one ruler succeeds another, with all its implications, from revolution to imposing the will of the majority over a minority. But with the conviction that achieving the common good is in our hands."
"We agree on that," says Frederick, and then suddenly starts laughing.
"Why are you laughing?"
I was still drawing the parallel in my mind, and I'm thinking of what Darwin recently wrote about religion. Before he started his voyage on the Beagle, he himself says, he cited the Bible as an authority. He searched for centers of creation, and saw the similarity of certain insects in England and Australia as evidence of the hand of God. Over time, he wondered why all religions wouldn't be equally valid in accepting that hand of God. Later, it seemed to him that the theodicy proposed by Leibniz and justified by Malthus clashed with the idea that an evil like hunger is simply a consequence of the generally good laws of the benevolent creator. Darwin argues that natural selection shows the good side of adaptation, without the need for any underlying intelligent design. Besides, what would an all-powerful God intend with pain and suffering, as when animals paralyse the larvae of others and then offer them as living food for their procreation? Although Darwin continues to do parish work, he hasn't attended church for years. And recently he wrote: '*I've never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God. I think, generally speaking, agnostic would be the most accurate description of my state of mind'.* Perhaps it can be said that there is no point in denying the evolution toward equality and fraternity. But there is no evidence that any particular form of action will bring about that evolution."

Annie laughs. “Your analogy is a bit of a stretch, but I can understand it. When Darwin uses the word *agnostic* to describe his state of mind, what exactly does he mean?”
“I suspect he uses the word in the way Thomas Huxley does in an article in a fairly recent magazine called *Nature*. In it he says something like that *a-gnosis* on the existence of God means that the question of whether there is a God or not is insoluble, because according to him the answer to that question is unknowable.”

Throughout 1880, Frederick continues to gather information about the rise of universal education, which is increasingly becoming mandatory. It is the same year that, for political reasons, the Belgian government terminates its diplomatic ties with the Vatican. According to Frederick, this is a rather pointless anticlerical measure whose only result is to further harm public schools. By then, the anticlerical liberals have adopted such an identical stance to the clerical liberal-haters that any dialogue has apparently become impossible.
Meanwhile, over the past fourteen years, the number of people who can read and write has risen from about one in two to seven in ten. Yet, reading and writing often means nothing more than that more people are able to write their names or can still partially read texts memorised in primary school, as Annie notes after one of her visits to various factories in the Liège region. Many young people still only attend adult schools. Boys can attend in the evenings and girls on Sundays. It’s a strange situation: boys and girls work together in factories, but since 1866 adult schools have been open to them but they are not allowed to attend evening classes together. Annie did hear that a new royal decree allows simultaneous evening classes for boys and girls in densely populated neighbourhoods, with adequate street lighting and at specific times. Administrators are primarily concerned with maintaining morals, and summer or evening schools are often nothing more than a kind of daycare

center for young and older children, to keep them off the streets. Winter evening schools offer better returns, but they also contribute to truancy in day schools: given the low wages, both young and old prefer work over school, and naturally, employers prefer that schools don't take their young workers away from their jobs. Annie remains convinced that all the liberal discourse on public schools should be taken with a pinch of salt. Frederick agrees, especially after Isabelle Gatti tells him about the new opposition to the expansion of her school. Her first school for girls, which, according to Frederick, was founded for the liberal bourgeoisie, suffered mainly from a hateful campaign by conservative newspapers. But when she persevered, her school became more successful. And now she has developed pedagogically more, with her own team of teachers and administrators, putting her far ahead of the government. Today, she clearly distances herself from the doctrinaire liberals. She also mentions that she and Karel Buls have just started a regents' program and that she's thinking of opening a pre-university section next year. When Frederick suggests that this will once again sway both opponents and supporters, she replies that the end is certainly not in sight. She then adds that more credit should be given to César De Paepe, who, despite being formally expelled from the International, perseveres with a few associates, and that a large workers' party will almost certainly emerge, partly due to the wavering positions of the liberals. She even predicts that in her efforts to mobilise women into politically active citizens, she might be better off with De Paepe and his peers.

In England and Wales, where the *International Workers Alliance* officially started, compulsory school attendance was only introduced this year for children between the ages of five and ten. But here also absenteeism is high. Older children are often used to care for younger siblings or sent out to work because of the low wages of many workers.

In Portugal, where there is now more interest in the *Cartilha*

Maternal, António Faria de Vasconcelos is born in Castelo Branco. He will later open a school in Belgian Bierges-les-Wavre modeled after Paul Geheeb's.

A reading method is gradually gaining popularity in the Netherlands and it's gaining popularity. It's a standardised method that combines two principles. Jacotot was one source of inspiration. To help students learn a language independently, the professor gives them a text with an accompanying translation, allowing them to learn the first language and explore the second. For children exists De Raaf's *normal sentence* method, but also Bouwman's *normal word* method. And so, analysis is linked to synthesis. On the one hand, the children analyse selected words or sentences. Synthesis exercises immediately follow so that the students immediately use the sounds, represented by letters and syllables, extracted from the words and sentences in other words through analogy. This accelerates the usual purely synthetic approach in which all the letters are introduced first. The relationship between analysis and synthesis, which begins with simple analysis, proves to be an improvement that far exceeds all improvements of purely synthetic methods. It also leads pure phonics methods to gradually introduce existing words to illustrate the sounds.

Furthermore, Frederick reads an article by Johan Leopold, who argues that puppet shows should have a permanent place in the classroom. The author discusses the character of Jan Klaassens (a kind of Punch-figure) and says, among other things: '*And I'm convinced that after a performance, it won't take much effort to strike up a conversation about it, one that the children will conduct with great enthusiasm. Will the respective teachers do the same? If there's anyone here who's afraid of being reduced to a buffoon, I must tell they didn't understand me. Those who elevate themselves to educators don't reduce themselves to a buffoon'*. Frederick discusses this with his mother. She emphasises the importance of play and symbolism in children's development and therefore finds puppetry entirely appropriate. But,

she adds, puppetry can be a form of expression that isn't limited to a more enjoyable form of instruction.

Henri reads attentively *Le Droit à la Paresse (The Right to Be Lazy)* in the newspaper *l'Égalité*. The essay is from the hand of Karl Marx's son-in-law, Paul Lafargue. In his often provocative and satirical style, Lafargue views the right to work as a trap set by the bourgeoisie to overwork workers, manipulating them into demanding a right to work instead of a right to decent living. Henri understands the essay ultimately advocates for a redistribution of wealth, allowing workers to work much less. On the one hand, the machines themselves can handle a great deal, while on the other, the long working hours create overproduction that even the owning bourgeoisie cannot consume, ultimately leading to lower sales figures and thus to overall losses. Loss of capital for the owners, loss of wages for the workers, due to compulsory unpaid unemployment. Paul Lafargue ends his essay with '*If the working class could expel the sin by which it is dominated and that degrades its nature, it would use its immense strength to revolt, not to demand existing human rights, which are merely the rights of capitalist exploitation, not to demand the right to work, which is merely the right to misery, but to forge an iron law forbidding any human being to work more than three hours a day. Then the earth, the old earth, would tremble with joy, feeling a new universe blossoming within it… But how can one ask a proletariat corrupted by capitalist morality for a virile solution…*
Like Christ, the sad personification of ancient slavery, the men, women, and children of the proletariat have for a century been trudging along the harsh Way of the Cross; for a century, forced labour has broken their bones, bruised their flesh, and tormented their nerves; for a century, hunger has twisted their bowels and hallucinated their brains… O Idleness, have pity on our long misery! O Idleness, mother of the arts and noble virtues, be the balm for human anxieties!'
Henri chuckles as he reads these sentences. He's thinking about how

he'll bring this up at the next family reunion, when Johanna and Frederick discuss the importance of a public school for the dissemination of knowledge.

This public school gradually takes shape, but it remains to be seen whether it also advocated for the dissemination of general knowledge. In mid-1881, a new secondary education law was passed in Belgium, primarily aimed at transferring funding from Catholic schools to State schools. Naturally, another wave of protest erupted. The clergy expressed concern not about general knowledge, but about the "soul of the child". This led to direct competition between Catholic and state schools, with the expansion of the network of high schools and secondary schools for boys. As Frederick scornfully observes, the government did provide for the spiritual well-being of girls whose parents had means. They remained dependent on private and Catholic girls' schools, where tuition often amounted to a third of a worker's annual income. According to Frederick, these private schools, run by Catholic sister communities, often focused primarily on moral education and little on general knowledge. It is therefore not surprising that the number of students at Isabelle Gatti's school continued to rise as long as the laws of the Catholic governments, and even now under Frère-Orban, limited the number of public girls' schools. The latest liberal amendment to the law, which provides for the establishment of around thirty secondary schools for girls, is nevertheless a small improvement.

Johanna sees the progressive girls' school in *Winnington Hall* run by Miss Bell in Cheshire, England, as an example for girls' schools to be established here. She thinks of John Ruskin, who worked with Miss Bell for a while and provided lessons for the girls. He wrote *The Ethics of the Dust*. This work, inspired by Socratic dialogue, discusses social and political ideals metaphorically. John Ruskin, incidentally, never hid his interest in girls' education. Just as he had previously done for boys' education in Oxford, he has always donated books

and materials to both the *Whitelands College* in London as well as other educational institutions for women, Johanna tells Annie and Frederick.
Annie notes that in general education is somewhat better for women and for workers in Northern Europe than in some southern countries. She occasionally receives reports about this through workers' collectives or mutual insurance companies. This way, she knows that *Normal School* for women in the *Calvário* Lisbon district, which began its activities in 1866, ceased operations in 1881. Some argue that the careless selection of both students and the incompetent teaching staff contributed to the closure. During the school's fifteen-year existence 141 of the 250 enrolled students obtained the qualification of primary school teacher. But the closure may also have been the result of the general negligence of successive governments. Casimiro Freire writes in the newspaper *O Século* that against this negligence and to combat widespread illiteracy, missions are needed in virtually every location in Portugal. These missions must consist of teachers qualified to teach people to read and write according to the method of João de Deus.
What Annie cannot know is that Casimiro Freire will soon take the initiative into his own hands and found the *Association of Mobile Schools according to the João de Deus method.*

Jeanne Teacher is meanwhile seven years old and enrolled in a primary state school in Liège. This has caused quite a bit of commentary among Frederick's colleagues. At the secondary school where he teaches, the influence of the church and the parish is apparently still quite strong. Frederick is accused, among other things, of being too easily influenced by his wife, who is six years younger than him and is known as Rode Annie (Red Annie) and not just because of her red hair. Johanna says she feels as if time has stood still. Apparently, the social pressure on Jeanne's parents is similar to what her grandfather experienced all those years ago in

Oostende when he enrolled her in a national primary school of the *United Kingdom of the Netherlands*. At school, Jeanne learns to read and write in French. Johanna and Frederick help her with Dutch, using books by Herman Bouman.

The *Cartilha Maternal* with the subtitle *The Art of Reading* is now better accepted, partly due to the efforts of Casimiro Freire. In Portugal, illiteracy remains a national tragedy. Mutual or Lancaster education is still the norm in practice mainly due to the shortage of schools and teachers. Although some political leaders repeat ad nauseam that schools are the means to regenerate Portuguese society, neither they nor most teachers have ever reconciled themselves to Antonio Feliciano Castilho's earlier attempt at methodological change. Despite the vehemence and stubbornness with which he continued until his dead to oppose mutual education and synthetic reading methods based on repetition and rhythmic spelling until, the teaching staff showed enormous resistance to the new method with a timid attempt at analysis. Even the *Normal School* of Lisboa did not give the method enough momentum. And now, despite the earlier failure, the way for his books lies open after his death. When João de Deus presented his *Cartilha Maternal,* intelligentsia and teachers had already been prepared to accept the methodological change. Since the current year, a parliamentary decision has been made to make the use of the *Cartilha* compulsory in Portuguese schools. Frederick and Johanna were given a copy and appreciated the lists of words or pseudo-words for each sound. However, they find Bouman's standard words with the accompanying pictures more appealing to children. Johanna thinks also it is easier for a Dutch teacher to adapt certain standard words to words represented by the children in the class. But she didn't know enough Portuguese to know whether that is actually the case. Meanwhile, in November 1882, the Mobile Schools Association, founded by Casimiro Freire, launches its first course using this method in Castanheira da Pêra both in day and evening classes.

Henri's aging friends from the local pub continue to follow events in Belgium and other neighbouring countries.
Naturally, they discuss at length what will happen to the attempts to unite workers internationally after the death of Karl Marx. Will socialists of different persuasions succeed in uniting under one umbrella again, or will the tensions between social anarchists and social democrats lead to further divisions? Some pub goers note that the liberal government in Belgium apparently passed some social laws faster than Prussia did. The workers' booklet is now optional. The establishment of the *Caisse de Crédit Foncier (Land Credit Fund)* is a fact.The credit institution for farmers, however, may benefit small farmers more than workers in general. State Schools are now allowed to teach Dutch mother tongue in Dutch, as well as two other optional subjects. Sometimes, knowing that there's protest from conservative quarters is enough for the local pub goers to consider a law is a good law. The clergy is angry with the credit institution and links its condemnation to the protest over new cemetery regulations. Furthermore, the French-speaking bourgeoisie in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium is deeply troubled by the fact that young people are now being taught partly in Dutch. Although you can count the Dutch speakers on one hand in Henri's local pub, and the regulars still hope for independence, everyone is immediately a fervent defender of Dutch in schools. Frederick, who is visiting Kelmis, is more critical and cites the latest figures from the Belgian army statistics. These show that eight out of ten conscripts can now read, which is a clear improvement. On the other hand, the number of conscripts with more than primary education level has declined over the past six years. This raises questions about the type of education. Therefore, he fears that a report about the further democratization of general education in Great Britain should be taken with a pinch of salt. Friends with ties to southern Europe, on the other hand, tell us that the tobacco workers of Lisbon, after having started the newspaper *A Voz do*

Operário they transformed their mutual insurance company into a more extensive Cooperative Association with the same name as the newspaper.

"There are many different ways of looking at the school and it depends on local circumstances," says Frederick.
Johanna and Annie look at him and the first asks: "What exactly do you mean?"
"I was thinking of the conflicts between doctrinaire clerics and doctrinaire liberals in Belgium and of the news from Prussia and from Birmingham," Frederick continues.
"Explain a little more," asks Annie.
"Mother, do you remember that Friedrich Fröbel married Luise Levin a year before he died? Well, a few years later, Luise started her own private kindergarten in Hamburg after the controversy surrounding Fröbel and his cousin had died down. Since then, she has trained many young women in Fröbel's pedagogy. There's a Fröbel Association today, of which she herself is a member. And now I just read that she's working on the proposal to start a kindergarten for the poorest of the poor in Hamburg's St. George district this year."
"So now the Prussian authorities are suddenly in favour of Fröbel pedagogy?" asks Johanna.
"I don't know, but at least this is about a school for the poor that's more than just a charity repository. And apparently, Luise Levin Fröbel is also concerned with what's being done for Fröbel education in other countries, from the United States to Russia."
"We don't hear much from neighbouring Belgium," Johanna provokes. "I recently heard someone write that since Catholics returned to power, Belgium is perhaps the only country in the world whose government is plotting against its own State Education System."
Annie laughs and then asks, "And what's happening in Birmingham,

Frederick?"
"Remember when we once talked about George Dixon? Karel Buls mentioned him in connection with the National Education League. Well, his latest project is called Technical School. He wants to teach science and technology to young people who are suitable, thereby extending their schooling by at least two years."
"So, while in Belgium there is a lot of arguing about religion in public schools, you hear interesting news from both Prussia and Britain about what can be done before and after primary school," Johanna notes.
Annie says: "But those are local situations, the kind you read about in a pedagogical magazine. There are also interesting local initiatives in Belgium. Think of Isabelle Gatti, for example."
Frederick nods. "I know I shouldn't equate a local initiative with political policy. But I let my resentment about the Catholic takeover in our country get the better of me. It strongly seems like we're returning to the pre-Van Humbeeck era. The doctrinaire liberals didn't implement many of our wishes, but I think we can expect even less from Joseph Thonissen. Municipal Schools are no longer a priority and can be replaced by independent schools. These independent schools may be religion-neutral, but they only have a chance of survival in municipalities governed by liberal mayors, that much is clear."
"But Prime Minister Joseph Malou resigned after the riots this summer, when even the King was worried."
"That wasn't just related to education. It was about more than that. The riots brought radical liberals, socialists, and even republicans closer together, and the King feared a general anti-monarchy climate."
"And now you have a government led by August Beernaert with Joseph Thonissen as Minister of Education?" asks Johanna.
"He's actually the Minister of the Interior. Beernaert has more or less tucked education away. And so religion in education is became

a domestic matter. I know that teacher training, even the state's, takes this into account. People talk about the importance of the social development of future teachers, who ultimately influence the education of future citizens."

None of the three can even imagine that the suppression of education, as Frederick says, will last in Belgium until 1932. There are, of course, others who see that everything has to do with the Catholic Church's desire to strengthen its grip on state education. Among them we find Karel Buls, who takes the initiative for a Covenant of Municipalities, in which the liberal municipalities promise not to close their official schools. For him, compulsory education is the way to emancipate workers and address social problems. He is now also chairman of the Brussels Willemsfonds and believes that the fund's branches should work on social issues, on the creation of public benefit institutions, and on the organisation of middle class and workers. This leads Annie to say that he holds almost socialist views.

Frederick laughs: "I'll tell him the next time I speak to him. But you could also say that it's a concern of many teachers who ind in …*Tot 't Nut* the roots for their trade union. As you know, this trade union has in the Netherlands the magazine *De Bode.*The magazine often features testimonies about the plight of working-class children. Just last year, I read that the latest labour survey once again made it clear that the majority of workers do not receive sufficient wages to provide a decent education for their children. The teachers of that union believe that primary schools should step in where the family is unable to provide. Spiritual education inevitably suffers when the physical is neglected. This year, an editorial states that teachers no longer hesitate to ask for government food and clothing in cases where parents are prevented from providing their children with what they need due to social imbalances."

Annie notes: "The fate of the workers is a tragedy that in many

parts of Europe is sometimes reminiscent of slavery. The tobacco workers' cooperative in Lisbon *A Voz do Operário* made providing a decent funeral service for its members its top priority when it took over the mutual insurance company that preceded the association."
Johanna then says: "The Calvinist *Pedagogische Bijdragen* has obviously his own perspective on workers and their organisations. I recently read how Van der Haas talks about the failing families who, he says, '*have not the slightest understanding of obedience, and where the mother often has to buy with money the children's willingness to perform some service or other. It's unfortunate, but it's simply the way it is, that in many cases the school must have an educational effect on the family.'* I think this is one of the more peculiar reasons for addressing parental authority, but according to the author, it's about combating socialism with a Christian upbringing. Would he equate a paid service with socialism and call Christian solidarity a service rendered? It seems to me a very narrow view of upbringing, authority, and humanism."

Henri and Johanna regularly receive issues of *the Echo of Oostende* from their friends on the coast. They learn that an office had opened on Kapellestraat, near the house still owned by Johanna, to serve the new train service between Oostende and Vienna. This journey in luxury carriages takes about 24 hours. Of course, connecting London with Vienna is the main objective. *Wagon Lits Company* has also offices in Oostende. A summer issue of *the Echo* announces that both the Orient Express to Constantinople and the Vienna Express will adjust their departure times to the arrival of the steamboat from Dover, while the arrival of both trains at Oostende Sea Station will coincide with the departure time of the steamboat to Dover.
The trains to Kelmis are less luxurious… Passengers naturally have connections to the line to Aachen and to Liège, Brussels, and Oostende, but the railway is primarily important to keep the zinc

factory running. In Moresnet itself, mining will cease this year, and the entire region knows this by now. In the pubs, there's a lot of speculation about new activities to secure the micro-state's independence. Didn't the Grimaldi family secure Monaco's independence with gambling? Couldn't a link be established with the casino there, but also with those in Spa, Namur, and Oostende to turn Kelmis into a casino city? Surely the British would be interested as would be the wealthy people of Prussia and northern France? Right?

In the late spring of 1885 Annie and Frederick are two weeks in Kelmis after their son Jean suffered a prolonged feverish childhood illness. The doctor recommends the country air to help him regain his strength. During their visit, they gradually hear the story of how the King of the Belgians became King of the Congo. It's a story of intrigue based on half-truths, worthy of a Jules Verne adventure novel. As almost always, the information comes mainly from the local pub, and Henri, in particular, is quite regal about it: "It all begins with Henry Stanley, who, after an initial expedition to the Congo region, wanted to return, perhaps with the intention of gaining fame and fortune. But his own British government wasn't particularly keen on financing him. Leopold, King of the Belgians, tracked him down and offered him an exploration contract."
"How?" asks Annie.
"Well, he himself had been working on it for some time. Nine years ago, during the Brussels geographical conference, he had already urged the establishment of an international association to study unknown areas in Africa. It received the pompous name of the *International Association for the Exploration and Civilisation of Central Africa*, in short AIA. The participating European countries were supposed to fund these explorations through national committees. In practice, little of this has come to fruition."
"But how does Stanley get a contract with that association?" asks

Frederick. “I heard that the association no longer exists.”
“Most national committees never got off the ground, but the King of the Belgians established a committee within the *Association Internationale* the *Upper Congo Study Committee.* In practice, it was a commercial company, more than a quarter of whose capital came from the King himself. The Committee acquired a new partner, which still exists today under the name *International Association of Congo,* AIC for short.”
“AIC instead of AIA,” says Johanna.
“You’ve already figured it out! Feel how this sows confusion. And perhaps that was Leopold II’s intention. So Stanley worked for the Committee and the *AIC*. And then comes Leopold’s masterstroke. Officially, the recently Conference held in Berlin was intended to have the industrialised European nations reach agreements on the division of Africa among themselves, which, incidentally, is rather arrogant in itself. Now, many claim today that the Belgian Court prepared everything down to the last detail, even though officially it was Bismarck who initiated the conference.”
“Only with European Empires?” asks Annie.
“And the United States and the Ottoman Empire. They didn’t even consider involving African heads of state or the Sultan of Zanzibar. The conference, as you know, lasted several months. Ultimately, the exploration limits in Africa of each of the European states exploring there were established. And the area around the Congo River remained free from exploration.”
“The area mapped by Stanley for the *AIC*?”
“Exactly. And the fact that the AIC isn’t actually international at all was cleverly glossed over. The conference act stipulates freedom of trade and navigation on the Congo River for that territory, neutrality in the event of conflict, but also actual taking possession with a view to securing the rights and the material and spiritual advancement of the indigenous population, while combating the slave trade.”

“And that actual taking of possession…” Frederick begins.
“… Leopold proposes that this should be done by the *AIC* under his personal supervision. After all, Belgium is not interested in colonies…”
“Now I better understand the debate in the Chamber at the end of April, when Xavier Neujean was the only one to vote against the proposal to allow Leopold II to become the head of state of Congo,” says Annie. “Because if everything you’re saying is true, then there is no international association at all, and Leopold has managed to have something outside the Belgian government: a kind of private commercial colony.”
Henri laughs ironically: “Yes, he himself has chosen the title *King of Congo* and the *AIC* is now *Congo Free State*. The illusion has been created without the local population itself knowing anything about it. The Belgian government claims to have nothing to do with the whole affair. But to me, this is pure colonialism, much like what the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs did four hundred years ago when they divided the world among themselves in Tordesillas.”
Frederick thinks about his father's story for a moment and then says, “I think we’ll hear more about this in the coming years…”

Frederick and Johanna read about the school Jan Ligthart has just started in The Hague. The teacher clearly prioritises the children’s independent learning, and according to Johanna, his suggestions are reminiscent of the work of Leo Tolstoy. Frederick understands from what he’s read that Ligthart incorporates independent learning pedagogically perhaps going even further than Fröbel. It’s also clear that Ligthart is particularly interested in working with the most disadvantaged children. He therefore places great emphasis on the teacher’s personality, which must create the right atmosphere and be original. There’s no point in imitating others, Ligthart argues. He also points out that obedience is crucial to give children the freedom they need to learn. According to him, the teacher’s task

here too is complex, because both aspects of the learning process must be balanced.

Mother and son also review children's literature. A side effect of the expanding network of state schools in various countries is that the need for children's literature is increasing. They understand Moore's point in his book *Literature at Nurse or Circulating Morals* when he warns authors to write according to traditional values, to help parents. But they agree that children's literature is a good way to safeguard moral values from dogmatic thinking, something Moore might disagree with.

Johanna notes in passing that those who speak about education and moral values are more openly critical these days of families who leave their children to servants. People keep citing Locke for this, who once wrote: '*Children should be kept entirely free from contact with servants as much as possible, because their bad examples greatly harm the politeness and virtue of many children if they are frequently exposed to them. Children often learn words, tricks, or vices from uneducated and corrupt servants that they might otherwise never have known.'* Frederick then remarks that if the bourgeoisie ever demands quality education for everyone, it will likely be purely out of self-interest. But Johanna thinks this won't happen anytime soon, because people tend to underestimate the harmful effects of bad examples, even when they acknowledge their existence. Such warnings are more likely to result in truly unsuitable servants being kicked out, rather than in better overall training for servants.

Johanna advises Frederick to pay attention to the latest medical news on behavioural patterns. She points to the work of Charcot and an article by one of his admirers, Sigmund Freud.

In Oostende not just the trains are the topic of conversation, although… The city now has connections to Vienna, Budapest, Konstanz, Trieste, and Alexandria, as well as Cologne, Carlsbad, Berlin, Warsaw, and St. Petersburg. Furthermore, one can reach

Oostende from Luxembourg, Basel, Lucerne, Milan, and, of course, Paris. The Orient Express also continues to operate. Almost everyone in Europe now finds their way to Oostende, its Kursaal, and its casino. But it's not just the trains used by the well-off that are being discussed.
The fishermen have plenty to discuss. Young John Bauwens has been working with his brother for over a year on a sloop with a steam winch. Most Ostend shipowners call it a daredevil venture. But shortly afterward, the Ostend shipyard De Coene builds the O 30 with a compound engine. This gives Oostende its first self-built steamship for fishing.

In Kelmis, the discussion isn't about trains or boats, but about stamps. Doctor Wilhelm Molly is an avid philatelist and remembers the publisher's of *Postage Stamp* April Fool's joke. At his initiative genuine stamps for Moresnet are now being produced. Two weeks after the first issue, they are promptly banned by the commissioners responsible for Moresnet's neutrality. They point to the still-in-force French law that clearly stipulates that the postal service is a State monopoly. There's laughter in the pub. The innkeeper asks jokingly: "And who's the monopolist? Leopold II or Kaiser Wilhelm I? Who looks better on the little piece of paper? The former is, of course, much younger. That's a better investment…"
Frederick reads that a real law has been passed in Portugal with regulations on what a teacher can do in case of indiscipline. It says: '*To help the students the teacher may use the following punishments: admonition; reprimand; denial of recess, confinement at school after school activities have ended, or any other punishment that does not affect the student's dignity or health; temporary suspension from participation, with information to families; and expulsion. These punishments can be imposed by the class teacher with the exception of expulsion and suspension for more than eight days.*' This is a written law because the inspectors often report extreme violence when

hitting and the use of the rod used to beat hands.

With Annie, Frederick attends a lecture by Walther Victor Spring at the University of Liège on the variability of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. University scientists noted that the city of Liège has a higher concentration than the surrounding countryside, possibly due to the use of coal for domestic heating and the slow combustion of coal gas, which produces methane in the Saint-Jacques district. Spring himself, along with Leon Roland, studied weather data and observed that the air cools more slowly due to the concentration of water vapour and carbon dioxide.

Frederick later tells Annie that he finds it hard to believe that a local phenomenon of coal combustion would have consequences for the entire planet. But he admits that he doesn't dismiss the idea just yet.

Whether the coal combustion used in the steamboats in the Ostend fishing industry also warms the air is still difficult to say. Last year, John Bauwens established a shipping company to operate his steamboat. This year, he started a second company to produce sails and ropes. On a larger scale, steamboats are, for the time being, an English affair. At least, that's what little Arseen Blondé hears when he moves to Oostende. For now, he only encounters steam on the tram. But his father, a helmsman on a sailing sloop, foresees other problems with steam than excessively high air temperatures. During 1887, tensions between English and Flemish fishermen are palpable because the English regularly bring their steam trawlers to the Ostend fish market to land fish. This reduces price fluctuations, and all in all, the price of fish drops. Factory workers receive wages in cash on fixed days by law, but this doesn't apply to the fishermen, who are often hired by boat. Sailboats for coastal fishing are largely dependent on weather conditions, so the regular supply, which drives down prices, is a bad thing for the fishermen. Moreover, now that Belgian shipowners are putting more steamboats into service,

the socialist Edward Anseele from Ghent arrives and proposes the fishermen should organize like factory workers and, why not, set up their own shipping company. This makes a deep impression on the young man. He will remember the Ghent foreman's appeal for the rest of his life.

Although many fishermen heard Anseele's proposals, putting them into practice is not self-evident. Priest Henry Pype knows this well. For several years, he has been chaplain in the fishing district of Ostend. He quickly becomes intimately acquainted with the hard and anxious lives of the fishing families. Many fishermen, who sometimes spent three or more weeks at sea, barely earn enough to support their families. Hunger, illness, widowhood, and orphanhood add to the loneliness that women and children already endure, repeatedly leaving the boats. For the time being, Henry Pype sees the socialist interventions as too dreamy for the fishermen, who prefer to trust in God.

"This is really getting out of hand now!"

Thus begins a conversation in Henri' s local pub. The Parisian's son is speaking, and the topic is the new fashions in cities hosting world fairs. Anthropologists apparently find it instructive to bring people from other continents over and exhibit them, as in a human zoo.

"Who comes up with such an idea?" asks the innkeeper.

Carl Hagenbeck is a wildlife dealer for zoos and circuses. A few years ago, he had the idea to organize a tour featuring an exhibition of wild animals alongside with Nubians, visiting London, Paris, and Berlin, among other places. Shortly after, it was the Inuit's turn.

"I heard about that," Henri interrupts. "Didn't they die eventually?"

"Yes, apparently they all got sick and died. But looking at primitives suddenly seems to be a popular pastime."

"Actually, many people here still have the same mentality as the slave buyers. Anyone who isn't European and Christian isn't human,

but somewhere between animal and human — that's still the thinking," interjects a doctor visiting Wilhelm Molly. "Many of my colleagues are quite happy to go along with the anthropologists who do nothing but invent hierarchies from primitive to developed, with the most developed apparently being the Europeans who have robbed other people from their lands or brought here under false pretences to exhibit them like cattle."

"You're pretty angry about this," Henri thinks.

"Yes, and I became even angrier when I heard an anthropologist whom I respect and who does not take a hierarchical stance when comparing people and cultures — he refuses to even use the expression *other breeds* — also agreed to set up such an exhibition in Chicago. The occasion is the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival in America."

"Who are you talking about?" asks the Parisian's son.

"It is about Franz Boas, a fellow countryman who emigrated to America. He uses the term cultural relativism to argue that cultures cannot be objectively classified as higher or lower, worse or better, less or more correct, but that all people see the world through their own lenses and thus judge nature and events, which forms the basis for their own culturally acquired norms."

"And he wants to demonstrate this in the exhibition? Isn't that an improvement?"

"I fear he's being very naive about the whole thing. Visitors don't go to an exhibition like this to learn, let alone to put themselves in perspective compared to others who are, moreover, confined to an open or closed cage. Many people go to such an exhibition to enjoy a good gruesome experience, or to stare in amazement at half-naked creatures who may be dressing themselves in artisanal crafted animal skins. They certainly don't go to such an exhibition to have an engaging conversation with the exhibits. Many Europeans and American immigrants still doubt whether those other cultures, which they simply call primitives, even possess a real language. It's

sometimes hopeless."
An awkward silence follows those last words.
Then, trying to break the ice, Henri asks, "Speaking of languages, is it true you have a colleague working on a new international language? Molly was talking about this recently."
"I don't know him personally, but he published this year *Internacia lingvo – Antaŭparolo kaj plena lernolibro*, a dictionary and course to learn to speak the international language he invented, under the pseudonym Dr. Esperanto."
"That will interest Johanna and Frederick," Henri knows. They were recently discussing correspondence between children and adults who speak different languages, and Frederick recalled a statement by Comenius, who is quoted to have once said '*The world needs a common language, easier than all the languages known so far*' whenever he himself fell back on Latin as an intermediate language."
"My first impression is that this *Internacia lingvo* is perhaps an intermediary language in conversations between people with different native languages. But international languages haven't made much difference so far. And how international are they anyway? The basic words have to come from somewhere. In this case, however, prefixes and suffixes seem to be common to keep the vocabulary simple."
The innkeeper sidesteps Henri's diplomatic aside: "To continue on the subject of primitives, do you know the latest news regarding the *AIC* or *Congo Free State?* The Belgian government claims it is simply about a personal connection between Leopold, constitutional monarch in Belgium, and the same Leopold, absolute monarch in the Congo Free State, ha ha! Even those who attended the Berlin Congress don't believe this fairy tale."
Frederick chimes in: "Meanwhile, a considerable amount of public money has already been invested in Leopold's country. And the whites who have settled there as if it were a colony are mainly

Belgians."
"What I know," says the Parisian, "is that there is a lot of ivory trading going on and rubber plantings are increasing since John Dunlop's rubber tires begin to wrap around the wheels of vehicles."
The innkeeper continues: "A few weeks ago there was a priest from the *Society of Missionaries of Africa* passing through. He told me that his missionary order began an anti-slavery campaign this year in accordance with the provisions of the Berlin Conference, to which Leopold II committed himself for the area that makes up the *Congo Free State*. The Europeans mainly targeted Arab slave traders. But Hamed bin Mohammed el Marjebi, whom Stanley appealed to, to establish the territories that are now part of the Free State, is known to trade in ivory as well as slaves. He uses them himself on his plantations. Well, Hamed has now even risen to the position of governor. According to that priest, he may now be discredited, although he is still highly regarded as a local governor."
"All in all, it appears that, through the hand of their King, the Belgians are engaged in colonial activities, even though it was agreed at the founding of the Belgian State to remain neutral in this matter."
"What do you want? There's money and power to be had... and the agreement at the time of its founding was mainly a demand from those who built Belgium and didn't want more competition in the colonisation of Africa," sighs Frederick.

In colonising Portugal, local associations such as *A Voz do Operário* own libraries. Establishing libraries in schools and associations to promote knowledge and reading skills remains a top priority for most education leagues, teachers' associations, and workers' organisations throughout Europe. Increased demand for reading material also means a demand for more affordable books. This has consequences for the publishing world. Louis Hachette, primarily known for schoolbooks, quickly expanded his offer to

include travel literature for sale at train stations. The initiative *Education and Recreation Magazine* from Hetzel and Jules Verne runs well and integrates *La Semaine de La Jeunesse* edited by Hachette. His goal remains to bring together scientists, writers, and illustrators, to reconcile science and fiction, and to use imagination for educational purposes. Thanks to Jules Verne's publications, the genre is very popular.

In England too scientists are venturing into fiction and imagination, even for children. Frederick and Annie along with Jean and Jeanne, now 10 and 13 years old, have of course read *Alice in Wonderland*. The book is written by the English mathematician Dodgson. They appreciate the humor, which is different and more frequent than in Jules Verne, the other widely read author in the family. The French translation of *Alice* helps Jeanne read the original English version. Shortly after, she reads the translation of the Italian *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. *Treasure Island* stands in the family library along with the *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Annie thinks about the time she spends reading with her children and compares it to her own childhood. Even if her father had been able to read back then, he wouldn't have had the time to spend with his daughter as she does now with her own children. Her mother's early death after the fire that took her life left her an only child. Her father never wanted to remarry. She can say that having been welcomed first by Carine and then by Johanna at the Barn changed her life forever. Every time she goes to the mines and factories with her socialist comrades to discuss mutual insurance and workers' associations, she tears up as she sees the malnourished children, younger than Jean and Jeanne, passing through the factory gates, sometimes led by an emaciated mother, sometimes alone. And the laws are only slowly changing working conditions. This year, the right to join trade unions for workers was finally voted in Belgium. It is now officially forbidden to hire children under twelve. Children under sixteen are not allowed to work at

night, and women under twenty-one are not allowed to work underground. But many children end up in factories right after the age of twelve.

In Belgium, there is now a provision of primary education almost everywhere, although still with considerable control by the church and clergy. There are also *écoles et classes ménagères* specifically for girls preparing for marriage and open to those over 12. Annie says it's a poor attempt to send young women from the factory to the kitchen despite the impossibly low family income of a working-class family.

The day schools and stricter legislation combined are causing a continued decline in the number of students in Sunday schools, which are primarily run by the Catholic Church. According to the clergy, this jeopardises catechesis. Many parish priests complain that young workers prefer to seek entertainment rather than Sunday school lessons.

Frederick believes it's hard to expect any interest in study from someone who steals their childhood and youth 12 hours a day, when that study, like factory work, is subject to strictly imposed rules. Who wouldn't rather seek some relaxation and entertainment in their scarce free time? But the vast majority of conservative clergy disagrees: the public school is necessary for learning to practice religious virtue. Moreover, conservative Catholics argue, it's the only way to counter the rising tide of pernicious socialism. The public school for life must help combat errors and protect society from socialism. So, certainly not a neutral school, as liberals advocate. And that's the vision they're trying to instil in teachers. Frederick reads in the 2 years old *moniteur des instituteurs primaires nr 27*: '*The day when popular education no longer includes religion as a primary branch, the day when education takes its support only from rationalist morality, will be the end for the family and society and the reign of anarchy will begin.'* People are openly talking about the socialist training college as a threat to the future of humanity. As

Frederick reads this, he thinks of another article about the experimental school recently founded by Scottish academic and educator Cecil Reddie to put his progressive educational philosophy into practice. '*The New School'*, also known as Abbotsholme, started this year with six students, offering a less rigid and more liberal education than what is frequent in schools. English, French, and German are taught instead of Latin and Greek. The fine arts are core subjects, and practical skills such as animal husbandry and carpentry are part of the curriculum. Although the school does not call itself socialist, its founder does want to break with the traditional conservative views of the school. Cecil Reddie says he gained his ideas primarily in Göttingen when he studied there. He is a member of *the Fellowship of the new life.* Like many of his fellow members, he advocates pacifism, vegetarianism, and a simple life, largely influenced by the ideas of Leo Tolstoy.

"The Sovereign of the Congo Free State is apparently doing well," the innkeeper begins. "Have you heard about the Brussels act? Leopold cleverly avoided an overly international anti-slavery brigade that would threaten his Free State. Governor Tippo Tip continues to serve him. Although Monseigneur Lavigerie accuses the man of slave trading, Leopold would rather figure out how to save the goats and the cabbages himself; that's my opinion on the matter."

Carine's husband responds: "That whole Brussels conference is what I call a false humanitarian cause. The European emperors and kings and the big bankers want to abolish the Arab slave trade, but not slavery itself. They primarily want a reason to continue occupying Africa, so they make colonisation of Africa the solution to the Arab slave trade. The more they are present, the more they can undermine that trade. Meanwhile, Christians will continue to Christianise, and Africans will continue to be called primitives."

Henri then replies: "Our missionary friends recently visited again

and according to them, those primitives have to do forced labour, among other things to harvest the substance they use today to make tires."
"Would you like to bet that Leopold will make big money from his new empire?" says the Parisian.
"I don't want to but perhaps my competitor from Hotel Bergerhoff does," is the immediate answer from the innkeeper."
Everyone is laughing.
"Are there any members of the *Hunting and Sports Circle* present," someone asks loudly.
Laughter erupts again. In Kelmis, it's easy to stay informed about everything, and everyone knows by now that the circle that meets at Hotel Bergerhoff is essentially nothing more than a club for gamblers, not athletes. Unless, of course, you consider gambling a sport.

Vincent van Gogh died midway through this year. Some people talk about suicide, others have doubts about it. But Annie remembers the depressed young man she met in the Borinage, who she later learned had left the region to dedicate himself permanently to painting and sculpting. According to connaisseurs he wasn't always well-received in artistic circles. Many critics still claim he wasn't a particularly great painter. She wouldn't be very surprised if it were suicide after all. She talks about Vincent and his original drawings from the Borinage with Frederick. He notes that it's always difficult to stray from the boundaries of what the majority considers normal, proper, beautiful, or harmonious: "That's often the case with painters. Think of Vermeer or Rembrandt. But you also see it with composers. Some are fortunate enough to be appreciated quickly when they innovate; think of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. But others have a harder time. Berlioz didn't immediately receive the recognition he'd hoped for. And Schubert, who was only 35 when he died and whose songs we often

hear today, had a very difficult time and wasn't particularly appreciated by Salieri, one of his teachers."

Annie smiles. "And stepping off the beaten track when it comes to parenting, teaching, and children's books is also dangerous. You're right. It's difficult to work on something new, avoid being arrogant, and still get recognition."

"Perhaps it's about that recognition. It seems that those who succeed on the beaten path are so afraid of those who innovate that they react arrogantly to the first acknowledgement. Receive recognition doesn't mean replacing one thing with another. It's about coexistence. And we see that in music too. There are composers who hold divergent ideas yet still interact cordially. But coexistence often seems to be lacking in our society."

Frederick suddenly stops, and Annie notices a thoughtful look in his eyes. "You're thinking about something else," she says.

Frederick nods. I think of what I've read about the awarding of student grants since Belgium was invented, first as part of the *United Kingdom of the Netherlands* and shortly thereafter as a sovereign state. The elite has always protected itself, and the awarding of grants hasn't, in itself, made access to higher education easier for the rest of the population. They always say that grants are for those with less wealth, but then immediately add "and of good aptitude". A dubious criterion. Good aptitude sometimes trumps the criterion of less wealth, which means that grant recipients regularly come from the academic elite. Furthermore, grant recipients are usually the sons of doctors, lawyers, ministers, or higher-ranking civil servants, and rarely of butchers, factory workers, or small craftsmen. Until about twenty years ago, three-quarters to two-thirds of university students came from this elite, and the grants were concentrated in that group. In the last ten years, there have been slightly more students who don't come from the elite, but the grants continue to go to elite students in equal numbers. And now that women are finally admitted to some universities… it is clear

that the grants are not intended for her for the time being."

The grants awarded in the first half of the last decade of the nineteenth century (*with a shift of one year, the last decade of the hundred and eighteenth hectoyear*) is a kind of confirmation of Frederick's observation about access to higher education. They serve to confirm the social composition of a university population, not to expand it.

People like Arseen Blondé, who would later fight for better living conditions for the fishing community, did not attend college. Arseen himself signed on as a ten-year-old boy on a steam trawler and, a few years later, became a helmsman for skipper Zonnekeyn. For him, the circle of friends who founded the weekly magazine *Klokke Roeland (Clocks Roeland)* in Ninove was too far away. The group known as *the Roelanders* is from Catholic origins with a strong democratic focus. One of its members is the wealthy gentleman farmer and lawyer Jean-Baptist Vanlangenhaecke, who makes time available to provide free advice to those in his region who need it. His farms are study houses. You could call it a kind of evolved version of Johanna's barn, where working-class boys can earn a university degree through self-study. Later, they will form their own circle of friends to help other young men.

You could say about the *Roelanders* that as a group they offer informally scholarships to working-class children. The elite that governs the state here and elsewhere doesn't get nearly that far, not even for primary education. That's also why a cooperative like *A Voz do Operário* in Lisbon follows the example of others and founds the *Sociedade de Instrução e Beneficência A Voz do Operário.* In 1891, a boys' school is established for the children of its members. Two years later, the first girls' school was opened. The following year, a third school was established. Meanwhile 11,000 members were searching for ways to send their children to school, but after establishing a fourth school, the association could no longer afford

further expansion.

In general, in the educational world, teaching remains more important than mathematics. To make teaching more visual, many American schools have a magic lantern to project images. Teachers and schools can purchase them through a catalog. This offering is also becoming popular in other countries.

The British government is now really pushing for free education. But even here, many children remain additional breadwinners for working-class families, and although attending school no longer means any expense for a family, in practice it means less income. Children are often registered as pupils without sending them to school, simply to conceal the fact that they are working in factories.

The technical school that Dixon established in Birmingham a few years earlier became a great success. In 1888, Dixon's school moved. He also changed its name, first to *Oozells Street Board School* and today to *George Dixon Higher Grade School*, where also girls can study. The model is now being adopted in other cities. In Small Heath, starts in 1892 *Waverley Road Higher Grade School* for 555 children. There is already a proposal for a technical education law that will formalise the financing of this type of school.

Meanwhile, some municipalities adopted the practice of issuing standard certificates attesting to personal achievement. In London, for example, anyone who can read, write, do arithmetic, and maintain a household economy receives a Standard VII certificate after primary school. Reward cards to praise children for good behaviour are also quite common in many schools.

In the Netherlands, the first reading chart became fully established in 1894. It consists of two rows of a total of fifteen phonetically pure normal words: *raam, roos, neef, fik, gat, wiel, deur, zes, juk, schop, voet, bok, bijl, ei, ui (window, rose, cousin, fire, hole, wheel, door, six, yoke, shovel, foot, goat, axe, egg, onion)*.

Frederick reads a remark by teacher J. P. Eeraerts in the magazine of the Dutch trade union that moves him. The man writes: '*For as*

long as the school remains what it currently is in many cases, a temporary holding place for children unfit for the factory and the workshop, any improvement in the curriculum seems illusory to me. People whose lives are destined to become a continuous postponement of succumbing do not need careful training. For teachers, who must provide such people with their first and only education, current training is probably sufficient.'

It is clearly not enough to simply devise a better reading method; the entire way of thinking about society must be revised.

Public libraries are often an initiative of the local *National Education Leagues*, when a league uses school libraries as a strategy to encourage reading. Moralists immediately criticise this and try to turn isolated incidents into a general phenomenon. They claim the libraries distribute filthy reading material, dirty serials, and bad novels to both adults and children. The magazine *Peadagogische Bijdragen* spray criticism on *The adventures of Jan Kanon.* That book is dismissed as flat and rough because of passages such as: '*the doctor began by sawing the skull, lifting it off like the lid of a soup tureen, then scooping out the brains with a spoon and pouring them into the wooden head, he then quickly cut the neck'.* Frederick agrees that this isn't exactly an example of sophisticated literature, but he suspects the example only serves to create a general climate of suspicion. '*A school library isn't a luxury but a requirement. There can be no question of particularly bad, immoral reading of spicy novels like Zola, Daudet, etc.'* the magazine writes. For Frederick there is a huge distance between Jan Kanon and Zola…

In the 90s, Annie reads about the American astronomer Henrietta Swan Leavitt. She studied at the *Oberlin College* in the *Harvard University's Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women.* She had a fairly diverse education that also included analytic geometry and calculus. Shortly after receiving a degree in astronomy, she was left permanently deaf after an illness. Today, along with Annie Jump Cannon, she is part of a group called the *calculating women* in a

project by Director Pickering of the Harvard Observatory. The goal is to complete the Henry Draper catalog and map and define every star up to magnitude 9. Henrietta Leavitt is specifically concerned with the group of stars with varying magnitudes. Legend has it that after a comment to her about their incredible speed, one of the women replied that thanks to their deafness, they aren't distracted from their calculations.

The city of Oostende seems to be definitively attaching itself to the title of *Queen of Seaside Resorts*. This title is only of local significance, but the Ostend Chamber of Commerce is starting to refer to the city that way in neighbouring countries. Railway carriages are ideal poster carriers. The carriages of the *Northern Railway Company* are just an example. The reference to Oostende as a luxury seaside resort appears along with timetables for reaching it by train. Currently, two direct trains run daily from Paris to Oostende. The Oostende-Wien Express has been advertised for years. The carriages of trains serving England, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and Portugal feature posters, and cafés and restaurants in the capitals of surrounding countries also receive posters.

The railways brought about a radical innovation. The sun no longer served as a beacon to determine local time using sundials to synchronise church bells and clocks. No, the increasingly busy train traffic and the numerous connections and crossings on single-track lines demanded a standardised time across a large area. Therefore, in Belgium, legal time came into effect on May 1, 1892. Throughout the country, midnight coincided with midnight at Greenwich Mean Time. According to Frederick, the Belgian government was thus sending a clear signal that it now effectively endorsed the decisions of the Washington Conference of October 1884. After all, that conference had adopted Greenwich as the universal prime meridian to begin a new 24-hour day at zero o'clock. As a result, the day date

line lies in the Pacific Ocean without intersecting any populated areas. All in all, the Greenwich Mean Time has only been recognised for about two years and is still not universal. The French government, for example, continues to advocate for moving the prime meridian to Paris. And there is also someone who puts forward the Jerusalem meridian, as cradle of the Abrahamic religions, as the zero reference.

In the year Tchaikovsky and Conscience die, Lucien Souris is born in a small village in the Ardennes. Just over half a century later, he would become the grandfather of Paul Demeester, in whose young life he would play a major role.

That same year, Priest Daens clashes for the second time with the church hierarchy, in the person of Ghent Bishop Stillemans. This time, it is related to his interest in the fate of factory workers in the Aalst region where he lives and works. He frequently contacts the Flemish *Roelanders.* Both circumstances makes him one of the founders of the Christian People's Party, inspired by the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII. Conservative Catholics are not at all pleased with the programme of the Christian People's Party, which aims to radicalise and democratise the Catholic Party.

When Frederick and Annie read about the Christine People's Party, they consider the Catholic Party's departure from the Party the most convincing proof of the hypocrisy of ecclesiastical and civil authorities who claim to be guided by Christian values. These authorities are so hostile to the social aspects of Christianity that, in the region where Priest Daens is active the Christian People's Party ultimately seeks rapprochement with socialists and radical liberals. And all in all, the party's platform is nothing more than what one would expect from a good Christian. The party advocates for decent living conditions for workers, with the right to unions, work insurance, and better regulations for working hours for women and children; good agricultural credits for farmers, progressive taxes on

movable and immovable property; compulsory and free education and further Dutchification of administrative life in Flanders; a volunteer army to put an end to the practice of raffled draftees, where the sons of wealthy people who are selected too often buy their exemption by exchanging lots. Furthermore, there was an open call against the policies pursued by Leopold II in the Congo Free State and finally, the party demanded universal suffrage.

Annie closely follows the 1894 elections and the results of the socialists and the Christian People's Party. Although universal plural suffrage for men had been introduced the previous year, the Catholic Party wins an absolute majority in Aalst. The Christian People's Party refers electoral fraud what was indeed what happened. A re-election is held, and Priest Daens is elected as a representative. For the conservative Catholics, Daens and his party members are a hostile group. This is mainly due to the social struggle they wage, including their demand that administrative and legal matters be handled in their own language. The Frenchified bourgeoisie and the French-speaking aristocracy engage the church authorities. Although the Christian People's Party's electorate is nationally not very large, Annie observes that the party brings together people from very different positions in society. It embraces liberal factory managers as well as impoverished socialists, anticlericals and staunch Catholics. Annie is astonished by this great diversity. It seems as if the party is succeeding in forming an umbrella for those who differ greatly from one another, rather than exacerbating hostilities. Perhaps, she thinks, the sometimes somewhat populist criticism of the established authorities plays a role in this, allowing for the construction of a kind of seemingly impossible bridge. The party rejects both the Marxist criticism regarding the mutual socialists as the hard-line capitalist approach.

Frederick wonders how the dialogue within that party will develop. Will it become an example of what a peaceful coexistence could be? Those who identify with that party speak from diverse social

perspectives but still using the same language. And speaking even only symbolically speaking the same language is already an advantage for dialogue; he agrees with the Esperantists on that. Incidentally, he has become more interested in this unifying language since reading about Leo Tolstoy's supposed statement: '*I found Volapük very difficult, but I found Esperanto very easy. It is so easy that, (…) after just two hours, I might not have been able to write the language, but I could already read it fluently. (…) The sacrifices a European would make by devoting time to study this language are so small, and the results are such, that one cannot refuse to try.*' Of course, it remains primarily a European affair for who has time to study, as Tolstoy also says implicitly.

Johanna and Henri learned from missionaries doing evangelistic work in the East that slavery had also been abolished in Korea, at least officially. By the beginning of the century, all official slaves owned by government offices in the capital had already been freed. The abolition of hereditary slavery followed much later, in 1886. And it was only with the recent reforms of the pro-Japanese progressives, aided by the Japanese troops stationed in Seoul, that further change occurred, Henri and Johanna's interviewees claim. With the abolition of slavery, the examination system for recruiting officials trained in Confucian classics also disappeared. According to the missionaries, Korean slavery during the Chosŏn Dynasty was and remains tied to Confucianism as the state ideology. This means that Korean Confucians contributed little or nothing to its abolition, which they previously took for granted. Johanna cannot help but point out that in this respect there is hardly any difference with the attitude of sovereigns and government leaders who maintain Christianity as their state ideology.

Henri sees the human zoo on the Spui in Antwerp as an expression of another form of slavery. Once again, Congolese people were transported from their homeland to populate a mock Congolese

village. To complete the spectacle, the Scheldt is presented as a (cold) Congo River. The kidnapped villagers are expected to demonstrate their way of life. In Belgium, they are portrayed as so primitive that unsuspecting visitors exhibit the same behaviour as when seeing apes and other animals locked up in cages. The eager Belgian public feeds the exhibited Congolese. When Henri discusses this with Frederick and Annie, Annie says she can only hope their outrage will be expressed in parliament by the Christian Party, as this is the only party that clearly condemns Leopold II's policies in Congo. But Johanna and Frederick are not so optimistic. They fear that the inhumane fate of the exhibited Congolese is invisible amidst the many local problems. Moreover, even the scientific community doesn't unanimously agree with Frans Boas's ideas. They fear that those subjected to this new, horrific form of arrogant superiority will be left to fend for themselves, just as many Black slaves were and are where slavery still exists.

Meanwhile, the conservative Catholic counteroffensive against Priest Daens continues unabated. Less than a year after being elected as a member of parliament, the Bishop of Ghent prohibit him from celebrating Mass. He receives support from liberals and socialists, which, according to the hierarchy, is highly suspicious for a priest. The Nuncio intervenes and Priest Daens is summoned to the Vatican. Despite drawing inspiration from *Rerum Novarum* Rome advises him to leave politics. Priest Daens refuses, making things even more difficult for the hierarchy.

From a socialist perspective, Annie and her friends have recently found a new example that they use whenever they speak with workers about self-organisation and cooperation. From Albi comes the story of the *Sainte-Clotilde Glassworks.* They are getting a lot of information on this subject thanks to the efforts of Jean Jaurès, a member of parliament from the French South who gradually establishes himself as a socialist leader after first standing among

the miners of Carmaux and now among the glassblowers. After a strike, the glassworkers decide to build their own business, using donations supplemented by the organisation of a national subscription to 20-cent action tickets issued by the action committee of the *Glassworks* with the support of Jean Jaurès and launched by the newspapers *Dépêche de Toulouse* and *La Petite République*. The Albi city council also contributes. The action committee of *The Workers' Glassworks* explains that '*profits are not distributed to the workers, whom we do not wish to favour, or to the shareholders, so as not to turn them into exploiters; to strengthen the company's social character, it is formally agreed, in agreement with the glassblowers themselves, that profits are allocated to a common goal of the entire proletariat, namely the development of workers' associations.*' Regarding the management of the glassblowing factory itself, the workers have the greatest possible freedom to direct the work as they see fit. As in a commercial enterprise, the glassworkers do not receive the full proceeds of their work; a portion of the profits goes to a reserve fund. Forty percent of the personal remuneration goes to a pension and unemployment fund for the glassblowers. As mentioned, the general meeting decides annually on the allocation of the surplus.

Nowadays, Annie always takes French newspapers that mention the Verrerie with her when she goes to the factory gates.

Resurrection of mathetics

This brings us to 1896, the year of birth of Célestin Freinet, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky. These three figures would have a lasting influence on many teachers and pedagogues of the dawning century, including a grandson and a great-grandson of Annie and Frederick.

In America, professor of philosophy and pedagogy John Dewey is developing his educational system. It is based on a willingness to work, coupled with the curiosity inherent in all children. Dewey is a follower of Fröbel and keeps children occupied with all kinds of stimulating games until the age of eight. According to Dewey, objective interest develops after that age, and this can be better stimulated by rearranging the curriculum in what he calls cultural-historical stages. The school system he has just established consists of eight primary classes and two preparatory classes, each with various workshops. There is a large library, which is organised with the students in mind. Everyone can explore the curriculum there, presented in various formats. Agriculture and horticulture involve practical work. Social education is carried out, among other things, through this work-based or practical school system. Students are asked to work together on a given task. In this way, they learn, among other things, how to distribute tasks so that they are beneficial to everyone. Furthermore, the students learn that only cooperation leads to this specific desired result.

In Europe, knowledgeable educational circles discuss the difference between instructional schools and experimental learning methods. However, the agglomerating approach of children in cohorts to provide simultaneous instruction remains the most common form of organisation in the establishment of new schools.

Jeanne has just received her teaching diploma from a state Normal School and is going to work for her grandmother in the barn. She's

not hurried to accept an official position in a Belgian primary school, and since she was born and registered in Kelmis, she can easily start working for Johanna. Grandmother and granddaughter also intend to review practical and theoretical knowledge based on what Jeanne brings from the Normaal School.
That kind of teacher training colleges are gradually becoming the standard training school for teachers across the European continent. In Portugal, the practical application of an 1878 reform that shifted the mandatory teacher qualification exam to teacher training colleges is finally starting to take hold. Given the scientific and pedagogical requirements of such an exam, in practice, one can only become a teacher after graduating from teacher training colleges.

In Bruges, six young entrepreneurs meet at notary Jacqué's to start the shipping company *Pêcheries à Vapeur (Steam Fisheries),* founded on the initiative of John Bauwens, who already owned several steam sloops. John Bauwens becomes the director of this new company, which initially had a capital of 500,000 francs.
The city of Oostende is strengthening its connections with the hinterland by pushing for a new rail network upgrade. The double track to Armentières in France is underway and is already in use as far as Wijnendale and Eernegem.

Paul Lafargue realises his plea for laziness when his wife, Laura Marx, inherits part of Friedrich Engels' fortune. They use it to purchase a property in Draveil, France, not far from Paris. There, they intend to pursue their former commitment to improving the lot of the working class in a somewhat hedonistic way.

Disturbing reports continue to filter in from the Congo Free State. Local missionaries denounce the plight of the local population. Living conditions are deteriorating rapidly due to the spectacular expansion of rubber plantations. Rubber cultivation means forced

labour in a region governed by a ruler who made international commitments to the fight against slavery. He even engaged in armed conflict with the Arab-Swahili people for it. But apparently, this was mainly to keep out prying eyes, after the *Anti-Slavery Society of Belgium* was established and there was the 'danger' other powers would join in the anti-slavery struggle.

Annie is busy. Two years ago, the Belgian workers' party happened to receive foundation in both Flanders and Wallonia by a group of workers who gathered in the historic café on the Brussels market square, where the local branch of the First International alliance of workers once met. This also makes the general legalisation possible of socialist-oriented trade unions. Annie has a long conversation with Kamiel Huysmans, whom she knows from his time as a student at the teacher training college in Liège. Huysmans explains that, in his view, the workers' party's logical mission is to bring the class struggle envisioned by Karl Marx into modern politics. Increased industrialisation brings in more wage earners, which makes it possible to win a parliamentary majority in a universal electoral system. That's why he sees the need to connect trade unionism and party structure. Annie has still some doubts about this.

Portuguese primary education remains far behind the country's needs. The problems of public education are a highly sensitive area. Only a few thousand teachers work in the entire country, and it's not surprising that they are quickly organising as a movement. The era of pedagogical conferences being banned is over, and after the 1892 congress, this year there are even two. In addition to socio-professional issues, a strong pedagogical concern is being expressed in Lisbon. The principles woven into the conclusions presented to the government are consistent with liberal pedagogical humanism and the organisation of a program for primary schools.
Meanwhile, the provision of free education for the working

population is clearly inadequate. This is once again evident from the concerns of associations such as *A Voz do Operário* where many members hope to find the school that official institutions don't develop. To meet the members' demands, the association now contracts with small private schools, so that a total of 27 schools can accommodate 900 member children, in addition to the capacity of its own four schools.

Belgium is taking a different path. After initially working to extend general education and include more secondary schools, this secondary education system has been under revision since this year, with the aim of making it more vocationally oriented. A start is being made on aligning the difference between progression to higher education and transition to trade, industry, and agriculture. Special departments are being created in secondary education for this purpose. Johanna notes that the government is apparently uninterested in funding Comenius' old proposals. Despite the fact that general knowledge has increased enormously since his time, there is no room for his dream of three six-year general education sessions followed by vocational training of at least four years. No, vocational training should be incorporated earlier. The underlying logic seems to confirm Paul Lafargue's critique: workers are told to work as much as possible, preferably as early as possible. The change of power a few years earlier, when the conservative Catholic party returned to power, may have had something to do with this, Johanna believes. Jeanne has her doubts, but what she does know is that the number of state teacher training colleges in Belgium has drastically decreased. She has personally witnessed how existing, newly furnished classrooms, school furniture, and teaching materials were repurposed or sold at public auction. The annual amount spent on scholarships is considerably lower today than a few years ago, and there are once again more qualified teachers from episcopal schools than from state and municipal schools.

In the Dutch language area, the second reading chart is introduced.

It was found that the first reading chart with fifteen phonetically correct words *roos, neef, fik, gat, wiel, deur, zes, juk, schop, voet, bok, bijl, ei, ui (window, rose, cousin, fire, hole, wheel, door, six, yoke, shovel, foot, goat, axe, egg, onion)*, some sounds are missing. In the new version, some words are replaced and a sixteenth word is added: *raam, roos, neef, fik, gat, wiel, zes, juk, schop, voet, neus, muur, bijl, hok, duif, ei (window, rose, cousin, fire, hole, wheel, six, yoke, shovel, foot, nose, wall, axe, cage, pigeon, egg).*

Of course, a better reading chart isn't the solution in itself when it comes to eliminating illiteracy. In the Netherlands, teachers are well aware that truancy and child labor go hand in hand. Frederick reads in *De Bode* How a group of teachers from Hoorn (Netherlands) is organising to end absenteeism among children under 13. Personal visits to influential employers, articles in the local press, and a questionnaire requesting their cooperation resulted in 190 out of 200 local contacts committing to not employing children under 13 in their businesses. Annie notes that this is a good thing for the children in question but asks if this commitment also means better wages for the parents.

And it also remains important to work visually with the children, says Jeanne. In Sweden, applied manual work or *slöjd* part of teacher training. This applied craft includes not only woodworking and paper folding, but also sewing, crocheting, and knitting, for example. Working with worthless or free materials is highly valued, especially in geography. By creating projects, students gain more insight into certain phenomena. The applied crafts are often combined with sand table work so that children can imagine, for example, a polder with windmills, a power plant, white coal, or a telephone exchange. Jan Ligthart often makes *slöjd* usage. The Vandale dictionary edition 1898 says about *slöjd*: '*branch of education that aims at the all-round development of the child and tries to promote this through effective training of eye and hand, by having objects made of cardboard, clay and wood: there are different types of*

slöjd, such as paper-, wood-, bookbinding-, basket-making-, jigsaw- and carpentry-making slöjd'.
One of the pedagogical journals to which Frederick subscribed has a novelty related to the *Bedales School.* John Badley founded the school in response to the many limitations of Victorian schools: since this year the school has opted for co-education, which remains a controversial issue in England.
In some countries, vocational education is sometimes treated sarcastically in non-pedagogical journals. The article about the waiter school in Vienna speaks of the amusing sight of the little waiters in their short skirts and open vests on the school desks during the day, discussing the chemical composition of apple strudel, and then serving towering stacks of beer in the evening. In this case, they only attend school because their employers require them to do so to avoid heavy fines.
But there are also guilds or trade unions that replace guilds that have a vested interest in the vocational training of their young workers. Not only in Vienna are vocational schools emerging that offer young people the opportunity to combine practice and theory. Unfortunately, Frederick believes, this theoretical training is not general, but highly vocational. While this is a good thing in itself, policymakers are once again hindering the ability to provide all young people with more knowledge than their immediate environment requires.

Leopold II achieves his desires with the wars he initiates against slaveholders but the fate of the people of the Congo Free State does not improve. Escaping European colonialism becomes more difficult. In fact, it goes in the opposite direction. The soldiers placed by the King make it possible to incorporate Katanga into the occupied territory. Local chiefs are persuaded to recognise the sovereignty of the independent state. Naturally, Leopold's primary goal is to gain control of this land, which is exceptionally rich in

minerals. The French and British colonists reluctantly concede the *Lado-enclave* to be incorporated into the Free State, but only during Leopold II's lifetime. Meanwhile, the monarch receives income from the territory over which he is sovereign. Those who work for him increasingly force the local population into forced labour. He had invested almost everything his father had left him in the construction of the railway along the non-navigable part of the Congo River in order to export the extracted products.
As soon as the money starts flowing back, he designs major construction projects in Belgium. A new royal villa is being built in Ostend, and further renovations to the Kursaal have already begun.

In June 1899, Henri Teacher dies. His death isn't entirely unexpected, but the family is nonetheless deeply saddened. Johanna was 82 and decides the time had come to close the Barn School. Her granddaughter had already announced her desire to go to Great Britain to visit some schools, and Johanna supports her in this. She couldn't find any young teachers willing to come to Kelmis to continue the barn project. Johanna does some hoeing in the garden. She writes her memoirs for her children and grandchildren in several diaries, which Jeanne would later take with her when she leaves Wallonia for good.

Belgium remains governed by conservative Catholic governments that make no move to separate Education from the Ministry of the Interior. Currently, Jules de Trooz holds the ministry. According to Jeanne and her parents, this political option will certainly harm the development of education in the broader sense.
In early July, she finally takes the train to Oostende. Today, such a journey is comfortable even for those who don't travel on luxury trains. The trains easily reach speeds of 70 and sometimes almost 100 km/h on the line to Oostende!
Oostende has changed quite a bit since her grandmother left the city when she was about Jeanne's age. The dike, nearly two

kilometers long, has become a veritable parade ground. The Royal Chalet has stood for a quarter of a century in the dunes of what was originally Mariakerke. Oostende quickly took over that part of Mariakerke. For the city council, Oostende must remain the Royal seaside resort, and they have no intention of passing that honour on to a neighbouring municipality.
The casino is housed in the Kursaal. Gambling and betting are now officially permitted. Pigeon shooting became a wildly popular pastime, and Wellington Castle is the perfect location for it. However, there are increasingly loud calls to replace the live birds with clay objects flung mechanically into the air.
Jeanne arrives in Oostende in the middle of summer, and in a few days the horse races will officially open in the presence of the king. This, of course, explains the bustle in and around the city. A steam tram connects Blankenberge with Nieuwpoort via Oostende since about ten years. The *Laiterie Royal* (*Royal Dairy)* has also been open for almost ten years in the main parc of Oostende. Another popular meeting place is *The Chatelet* opposite the *Auberge du Petit Paris.* Jeanne immediately informs her mother that a cooperative has been established in Oostende by public employees. The cooperative consumer enterprise is known as SEO, short for the Dutch for Thrift-Economy-Ostend. For several years now, the coast has also had a regional newspaper called *De Zeewacht* (*The Sea Guard)* The Wagon-Lits group includes in the *International Company of Grand Hotels* which already has luxury hotels in Turkey, Egypt, Italy and Nice, the first class *Beach Hotel* near the Kursaal. This summer the company also opened its showpiece: the *Royal Palace Hotel* has no fewer than 400 rooms.

Through her grandmother's sporadic correspondence with some old friends in Ostend, Jeanne ends up with Edward Peeters and Maria Verstrynghe. Edward is twenty-six and a teacher at a municipal school in Oostende.

“I’ve been here a year now, and I’m at my fifth school,” he laughs. Maria explains that Edward is constantly at odds with the inspectorate, as well as with management and colleagues, usually resulting in a transfer.
“Why then?” asks Jeanne.
“Everyone says my class is disorganised. But I like a relaxed atmosphere in the class. I defend a *active school* instead of a *sit-and-listen-school*. That’s the norm here... But I heard from an old friend of your grandmother that your family lived here on Keizerskaai a hundred years ago running something like an *active school*.”
“And Grandma did the same thing with her *Republic of Children’s Barn* in Kelmis. But you work in public education, and that means you can’t do whatever you want?”
“That’s the crazy thing. We want all children to be able to go to school, and like-minded people who want *active schools* here and in other countries rely on paid education in schools where working-class children can hardly attend.”
“But how did you end up in the municipal education system in Oostende? I can hear by your accent that you’re not from here. I’d say you’re more likely from somewhere in Brabant,” Jeanne remarks.
”Yes, I'm from Berchem. I started teacher training in the late eighties, but then I decided to join the military, just imagine. In the army, I mainly campaigned for Flemish integration and taught many recruits to read and write. And then I ultimately decided to go into education. I got my diploma through the examination committee,” Edward answers.
Edward and Jeanne then exchange what they know about the influence of *’t Nut* and from the *Education League*. Edward tells Jeanne that before Belgium’s independence *’t Nut* had branches in Oostende, Ypres, Nieuwpoort, Bruges, Dendermonde, Antwerp, Namur, Ghent, Bredene, Tielt, Leuven, and Brussels. They link Johanna’s grandmother’s primary education to that association. At

that time, it was primarily about state education without church influence. Both are, of course, familiar with the work of Charles Buls and Jean Macé. Edward explains that the friendship between Jean Macé and Jules Verne, which is also expressed in the magazine *Éducation et Récréation* has to do with Macé's desire to do as much as possible to spread literature. He was at the origin of the cooperative *Société des bibliothèques populaires du Haut-Rhin* and played a major role in adult education. Edward tracked him down through his literacy work in the army. He was twice chairman of the Congress of the *International Social Sciences Association.* Edward then connects him with the Milanese publisher Emilio Treves and the freethinker Luigi Luzzatti. Treves translates books written by Macé and publishes them in Italian. He also publishes primarily children's books and is an advocate of secular education. Luigi Luzzatti is the founder of *Società promotrice delle biblioteche popolari di Milano*. Of course, these are all highly suspicious figures in the eyes of the Belgian conservative Catholics, Edward explains. Incidentally, they have been since the beginning opposed to the local branches of *'t Nut*. And the *International Social Sciences Association* had a positive role. It succeeded in helping Belgian progressives to establish a movement for educational reform. Meanwhile, the Belgian League has strong ties to the Willemsfonds because of the anticlerical course pursued by the doctrinaire liberals when they were in government a few years ago.

Edward and Jeanne agree that international contacts and exchange are important elements in achieving a more reflective approach to education. They believe it is the right way to bring the art of learning back into focus. The *active school* is a supporting concept for the mathetics Comenius already discussed, when homeschooling often provided the support not found in doctrinal training.

Jeanne says: "From everything I've read from my grandmother and her grandparents, but also from others, it seems clear to me that the path to an understanding, dialogical civilization starts with

education in which children from different backgrounds interact with each other."

"The great difficulty in increasingly schooled education is precisely bringing these different environments into contact with each other. Any dogmatic approach is unacceptable. You cannot build a dialogical civilization if you view society from the perspective that only one philosophical trend is correct, and that it must be imposed at the expense of all others. That's why the influence of the church had to be removed from general education," Edward answers.

"That's why I find this emerging trend of adaptive education so dangerous," says Jeanne. "The adjustments are supposedly intended to better help children who have less exposure to general knowledge at home to acquire that knowledge. But that's nonsense. Just look at how many of our colleagues aren't ashamed to say outright that adaptive education is good for keeping everyone in their own position. *Pedagogische Bijdragen* wrote five years ago: '*The greatest possible influence on national civilization can be achieved through the adaptive education of a significant number of the country's poorest children. But then these children should not be torn from their social class by this education, but rather be more firmly connected to it.'* This confirms that those in power want to keep the poor to be poor. And the teachers trained to do so happily collaborate."

Edward looks a little surprised at the intensity with which Jeanne speaks. He says with a laugh: "Then you can also get angry about the next thing I tell you. A book review in *School en Studie* ten years ago said about Anna Lindau's Fairy Tales that this book '*is suitable for the child of a noble family - not for the boy, the girl from the people*', because it requires a certain familiarity with the life of the wider world and, moreover, a great deal of general knowledge. It's not even suggested to tackle that knowledge with children who don't yet have it."

Jeanne gets excited: "That's exactly it! People say these days that children's and school literature is becoming too literary and

transcends the needs of a child from a proletarian background. But that's a false argument. It's the argument of those who create their own 'higher' culture, consciously separating themselves from others. The adapted programs, which as a first measure ban this literature, permanently lock young children in their own world. This is true for those who come from the proletariat, but also for those who come from the bourgeoisie. If you don't allow children to engage in dialogue about what they don't yet know, by hearing others talk about it, you won't get anywhere. What do children from a wealthy bourgeois background know about fishing techniques, about the dangers of factory work? Have they read Dickens's books? What does any child know about the financial world and how it works, about the difference between shared profit for everyone in cooperatives like *Carmaux Glassworks* and the concentrated profits in industrial complexes. What do children know about the exploitation of other children in the colonies and in the many places where child labor exists? There is a difference between the *active school* in which child labour serves one's own development and happiness and the factory in which child labour leads to numbness." Edward nods and then says, "In one of the last issues of *School en Leven (School and Life)* mother groups are brought up. It seems to me a more serious analysis than comments of the kind of Van der Haas that parents cannot raise their children and therefore buy them obedience, which is why children must be educated at school. But in *School and Life* colleague Stokvis writes: '*I believe that we (as long as capitalist society stamps its contempt on everything that doesn't directly yield interest, and especially on children and their teachers) shouldn't entertain any illusions about any of the resources we, the skilled workers, have tried. However, if we could form a large, non-political organisation of mothers, it would be a worthwhile endeavour. Which teacher would take the initiative here?*' It may be a thought for the future, for a society in which money no longer plays the role it does today."

Jeanne thinks for a moment and then says: “You can, of course, wonder about the role of the primary school teacher. Catholic dogmatists refuse to hear about the division between knowledge dissemination and upbringing. For them today the family’s sole task is to send the children to school. The teacher trained in (the for them only correct) religion then provides spiritual, physical, and philosophical nourishment. It’s not a good thing that family and school, society and work environment, each go their own way and that no provision is made for bridging these worlds. But with mother groups, the teacher could concern himself with knowledge and science, families and schools with thinking about educational values, not of a dogmatic but of a universal nature, regardless of philosophical background.

Getting people to engage in dialogue with each other is not the same as taking children to church for the pastor’s sermon and to school for the principal’s sermon.”

When Edward tries to intervene, Jeanne gestures with her hand: “Wait a moment before you say anything. I think in general elementary school isn’t intended to give children the opportunity to change the social order, but to preserve that social order at all costs. Those in power assume that the class distinctions created as they say by God or Providence must remain, and the order of the disadvantaged must be accepted as natural, even by the disadvantaged themselves. General elementary education should prepare proletarian children for this by teaching them to virtuously undergo the existing order. When those who institute compulsory schooling talk about combating ignorance, they have little to do with generalising knowledge and science, but mainly with moralising. Combating ignorance then means, first and foremost, through morality, fables, and the apology of work, shaping the lower class into a kind of perverse understanding that it is everyone’s duty to contribute to the protection of the more affluent.”

Edward now says: “It’s not just about what our colleagues think and say, or about maintaining an existing order. It’s also about what we’re asked to do as civil servants. We can agree or disagree with that as citizens, but as civil servants, we’re obligated to adhere to certain rules. And those rules are anchored in the societal image of those who claim to represent the majority, and therefore the power, and want to impose it on those who don’t. Democracy isn’t ideal. It often remains a process of forced acceptance. In Belgium, as everywhere else, primary school is part of the external development of society. Social, political, and ideological contexts shape that society. In Belgium, no educational method is directly imposed, but what is applied is the result of the competition between Catholic and state or municipal education. It’s too simplistic to simply argue that there is a pedagogical advantage in simultaneous education, which I call the *sit-and-listen-school*. This system exists almost everywhere, but here it is certainly what the Catholic schools advocate. Meanwhile, the clergy continues to convince the Catholic population that not attending Catholic school opens the door wide to hell. Those who find this too radical switch to state education but continue to seek a certain familiar structure. Moreover, if the teachers trained by Normal School’s justify their reason for being in this simultaneous education — they are trained to educate groups of children simultaneously — then the pedagogical added value is based more on beliefs than on scientific research.

This ultimately also played a role in some schools in Brussels and the *League* to question the arguments that were put forward as a model school. I think more will be needed to demonstrate that the benefits of simultaneous education are not based on scientific evidence, but simply because opinion makers and those in power advocate for it.

Jeanne nods and then says, “I’ve noticed that when people talk about model schools, they often refer to apprenticeships and factory schools. Schools where the focus is on limiting the learning of

working-class children to learning a trade. That was already the case with the poor schools. For girls in Flanders, these are apparently the lacemaking schools. Ultimately, you could say it's a factory disguised as a school: what the girls produce is sold, and the students receive compensation, less than a wage — they are, after all, students. The working days are long, and the general education provided is poor. My mother and I visited such a school in Turnhout. The girls work there from eight in the morning until five or half past six in the evening, and then have an hour to an hour and a half of general education. Tired as they are, they learn almost nothing."

"I know about the existence of those schools and how they work," Edward replies. "And it's even worse than you think. As long as children and young people skipped school because they had to work at the factory, they often went with the adults to lectures or other forms of public education in the evenings. But now that they're supposedly getting that education at school, they no longer go to those evening and Sunday activities. I hear it from everywhere: the *Causeries Populaires* in Sint Joost-ten-Node, the *Oeuvre des soirées populaires* at *Verviers*, or the *Cercle des réunions populaires de Mons et du Hainaut* in Bergen, the *Société d'instruction populaire de Morlanwelz et des communes avoisinantes, the Société d'éducation populaire* in Laken, everyone says the same thing. These days, they attract fewer or no younger people. Even the *Franklin Society* in the city where your parents live and where it was long considered a model, young audiences are also losing ground. Meanwhile, some schools are taking over these activities. In Charleroi, for example, for the past twenty years by the *Société des conférences de l'école industrielle de Charleroi*."

In late summer, Jeanne decided to use her share of the savings Johanna had built up over the years in Oostende by renting out the recently sold house on Kapellestraat. Johanna decided to divide the

entire fortune among her grandchildren, six in total, as far as we know [after all, almost nothing has been found about Frederick's siblings and their children].

Jeanne travels by steamship to Dover and from there by *LC&DR* to London. She continues with the *London & Northwestern* to visit Abbotsholme School, founded by Cecil Reddie and the Scottish Academy. She quickly learns that Abbotsholme does not consider itself a socialist initiative. The school board claims to offer only a progressive curriculum to the sixty or so students attended, who come from various parts of the British Empire. Besides intensive study and personal guidance, there is also a program of physical activity, crafts, recreation, and art. Modern languages and sciences are taught. Religious education includes religions and philosophies other than Christian, including Confucianism. The sexual education program is quite remarkable for a British school. Further on Reddie believes in a close connection with nature, so the boys work on the estate, raise animals, and grow vegetables. The students are free to walk around the school grounds. The uniform consists of comfortable clothing, a stark contrast to the collars and top hats of many private schools. Cecil Reddie is in charge. Jeanne learns that he quickly bought out the other founders and she feels his autocratic presence. All in all, Jeanne would later say, she saw here an interesting model for people who can afford to pay for it.

Not only the bought-out founders but also other teachers regularly leave Abbotsholme. This was the case with John Badley in 1893. The visit to Abbotsholme puts Jeanne on the trail of *Bedales School.* She takes the train to Petersfield to meet John Badley and his wife, Amy Garrett. John receives her and asks about Cecil Reddie, saying that Reddie taught him everything, both what to do and what not to do. Jeanne learns that it was Reddie’s opposition to their marriage that led John and Amy to rent the Bedales house in Lindfield to start a progressive school there with their friends Oswald and Winifred Powell. Badley emphasises the term “progressive” and says

that he has remained a socialist since his Cambridge days. Currently, both couples are very committed to building their own school building on a large plot they purchased in Steep. John believes that the school will open its doors later this year.

Due to its non-denominational approach to religion, the school can be considered relatively secular. There is no chapel. This made the school attractive from the outset to non-conformists, agnostics, Quakers, Unitarians, and liberal Jews. The curriculum is comprehensive, paying significant attention to science, art, music, French, German, and the opportunity to stage plays and pursue hobbies. Boys and girls are not crammed with exam material, and there are no prizes. Lessons are held only in the mornings. Rugby and other to the point of being extravagantly enforced sports, as is the case in conventional public schools, are avoided; instead, much time is spent on manual labour in the fields and gardens, and boys also learn to make clothes and boots, and to cook. Badley claims to have learned a great deal from Pestalozzi and Fröbel and after reading the work of Maria Montessori he believes he could also learn a great deal from her. He recommends Jeanne to buy a copy of the recently published *The school and society* by John Dewey, whom he calls the ultimate source of inspiration.

Jeanne understands that Amy and Winifred have made the school fully coeducational. John Badley himself is very reserved about this, due to his upbringing with the sexual repression characteristic of the English public school system. He has a somewhat strange obsession with Carpenter's sandal socialism and with the German Nature Cult, which involves cold baths, outdoor toilets, hand-woven fabrics, and "non-foolish" — that is, non-sexual — friendship between adolescent boys and girls. The new school will offer many opportunities for this nature cult, according to both couples involved in the venture. Oswald Powell also tells Jeanne that the school is quite well-known in Cambridge intellectual circles, including the Wedgwood, Darwin, Huxley, and Trevelyan families.

When she hears the name Darwin, Jeanne can't help but show that she read *The origin of species*. She brings up one of Darwin's conclusions and quotes: '*There is grandeur in this view of life, with its various forces, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, as this planet has continued to revolve according to the fixed law of gravitation, from such a simple beginning, the most beautiful and wonderful forms have been and are evolving endlessly*.'

Oswald then says: "It is interesting to read that Darwin himself used the term *evolution* in that sense until 1872. Until then evolutionism for he and his colleagues was more about the development of an embryo. It was not until the sixth edition of *The Origin of Species* that he uses the word *evolution* in the sense of the evolution of life forms as a function of living conditions."

Jeanne then says: "This also presents a new danger. What my mother and her political friends believe is that since we've been talking about evolution as a function of life circumstances, it's often given social significance. The survival of the most fit form has than little to do with biological adaptation, but with social adaptation, and thus different subspecies of a given species would naturally arise."

John then says: "As far as I know, Darwin speaks of subspecies based on the necessary adaptations for gathering food. He demonstrates this in certain bird species that live in isolated situations."

Jeanne nods: "But isn't that precisely why your fellow countryman Herbert Spencer is talking about the *survival of the fittest*? According to my mother, that reasoning gives rise to the idea of competition between living beings of the same species, and that doesn't seem the *biological* context in which Darwin uses the idea of evolution, of adaptation."

Oswald notes: "In fact, the colonising monarchs and their advisors always harboured the idea that there are subspecies within the human species, and that the white species — their own species — is

the most highly developed. This long predates Darwin's hypothesis on the origin of species and biological adaptation. Some apparently immediately used his proposals to link their own ideas to them. Thomas Malthus goes so far as to say that to keep population growth in check, there should be a kind of moral biological reflex among poor people not to reproduce. Even the selective breeding of humans finds an argument in Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis. But you could actually argue that in the long run, this selective breeding actually runs counter to Darwin's ideas. The most suitable adaptations result from existing diversity, not from existing equality. Breeding can lead to what we now call inbreeding, and inbreeding is rarely a good thing, as we know from animal breeding."

To this Jeanne replies: "I wasn't thinking so much about breeding, but more about the arrogant sense of superiority of colonising monarchs and states who abuse Darwin, I would say, to 'explain' why the English-speaking Europeans and the peoples of Latin languages are the one's who occupy the world. This would have to do with better adaptation. Benjamin Kidd, for example, wrote this a few years ago in *Social Evolution* And how easy it is to explain the disappearance of a certain population, not as a result of being exterminated by Europeans, but simply because they were too weak to survive. Such arguments are even used by some of our socialist friends simply because they find the stories of missionaries from Africa and America too clerical. In this context, my grandmother often talks about how ignorance leads to arrogance and arrogance stimulates ignorance. My grandfather Henri called it the "dangerous circular reasoning".

At the end of October, Jeanne crosses the Channel on her way home. While transferring from the train to the boat, she meets Lodewijk Demeester. Lodewijk has taken an intensive English course at Cambridge. He tells Jeanne that he comes from a Brabant

family of gentlemen farmers and that he belongs to the first generation to pursue higher education. He is finishing his training as a language teacher for upper secondary education at Cambridge, and he will now apply for a job. Jeanne is happy to see someone to distract her during the turbulent crossing on the North Sea, which is showing signs of the first autumn storms. Her experiences in Abbotsholme and Lindfield interest Lodewijk, who has many questions about co-education and an educational model different from simultaneous education. Jeanne asks if he has some time to visit Edward Peeters when they arrive in Oostende. She would like him to hear more from Edward about the *active* school different from the *sit-and-listen-school.*

The city still resonates with the Paris-Oostende International Car Rally when Lodewijk and Jeanne arrive. The rally finished at the Oostende racecourse on September 1, 1899. Nine cars completed the course over the northern French cobblestones in two days, reaching speeds of up to 60 km/h.

When they knock on Edward and Maria's door, it turns out those have the young Genevan sociology student Adolphe Ferrière as their guest. Edward asks if they can have their conversations with Adolphe in French, always looking at him. Adolphe is hearing impaired. Schools like Abbotsholme and John Badley's Bedales also interest him. He himself visited Edmond Demolins, who, like Jeanne last month, went on a study trip to Great Britain a few years ago and attended the same boarding schools. Demolins seems enthusiastic about the family atmosphere in those schools, the timetables, the teaching methods, the subjects taught, and the physical and sports activities. Adolphe Ferrière explains that Demolins has a particular interest in active and leisure pedagogy, where observation, experimentation, and deduction are important. Ferrière adds that Edmond Demolins thinks of the children of the elite, who must be given a suitable education to develop men of action. That is why he started a child-centred school, making him

an actor in his own education, and emphasising the need to build relationships with students based on respect, responsibility and trust.

“That’s all very well,” Jeanne begins, “but it’s all about the children of the elite. Boarding schools are expensive I understand that, but why are they always advocating idyllic learning environments without looking for solutions that don’t just cater to the children of the elite?”

Edward laughs: “Well, Demolins clearly opted for the idyllic. Adolphe told me that the intelligentsia of Verneuil-sur-Avre founded the *New School Society — Écoles des Roches* and with that company he purchased the domain *Guichardière*. They started the school this year. Fifty students are already enrolled.”

Lodewijk listens attentively and says: “I can imagine that things are different in your local school than in a boarding school, Edward?”

Of course. For to start, I only work with younger children, and I’m bound by the rules of simultaneous learning. Boarding schools that bring children of different ages together and have them work together don’t have that problem… A bit like your grandmother’s great-grandparents here at the Keizerskaai Schoolhouse, Jeanne.

When Lodewijk looks at her questioningly, Jeanne says she can tell him about this [See *The privilege of knowing*] during their train journey to Brabant. She now knows he lives in Tienen.

“Furthermore, the boys in my class are mainly children of the people, with a small ‘*but’*. The more Catholic families attend Catholic schools. Father Pype has a great influence on the fishing community, and many fishermen’s children attend his St. Andreas’ fishing school. The municipal schools are mainly attended by children from less strictly Catholic families of small craftsmen and some civil servants. Many of the parents of the children in our school are members of the consumer cooperative SEO. Recently, I’ve had a boy in my class who comes from Wallonia, Jeanne. His father is a steam engineer and was recently hired by shipowner

John Bauwens. The *Pecheries à Vapeur* company now has ten ships in service, and engineers had to be hired from inland. Little Lucien Souris, as the boy is called, talks constantly in French, but I've already managed to get him to play with his friends in the classroom on the playground. It's only a matter of time before he'll also be fluent in Flemish. I always try to work visually, so I plan to build a small steam engine with the children.

"Did the steam engine change fishing much?" asks Lodewijk.

"As far as I understand, yes! Before I became a teacher here, I worked for a while as a supervisor at the Atheneum. Then I had time to learn more about Oostende and its people. The fishermen's revolt has made a lot clear. The shipowners often used, and still often use, the greater working capacity of the steam trawlers to influence and thus keep prices lower for coastal fishing with sail sloops. As a result, many sailing fishermen have become even poorer than they already were. Signing up for steam trawlers has become unavoidable. Steam trawlers stay away from home for longer periods and can reach more remote fishing grounds in weather conditions sail sloops cannot handle. But there are also more accidents. Some ships sank quickly, such as the *O.81 Emmanuel* which sank on the Dogger Bank six months after it was launched. Steam trawlers also require very different maintenance than sailing sloops. A good engineer alongside the helmsman is crucial. At sea, as an engineer one must be able to repair something on his own if something goes wrong with the machine.

During the strictly vegetarian dinner except for bread to which Edward and Maria invite the others, the guests discuss what they hear about education and schools at home and abroad.

Regarding Turkey, it is said that all its universities are run by foreign teachers. Moreover, the artillery school managed Prussian teachers, apparently has a very good reputation. According to newspaper reports this is not the case for the medical school. Patients treated by doctors who graduated there have a one-in-two

chance of not surviving the treatment said somewhat scornfully. Secondary education is no longer in the hands of the French Jesuits but is gradually coming under German influence, as is Turkish society as a whole.

In Java, it's believed that learning Dutch, in addition to one's own language, is important for emancipation supposedly because that will allow Westerners to give the natives insight into social laws. This is entirely consistent with what Jeanne, John, and Oswald discussed when they addressed the dangers of social evolution theories.

A reporter who visited Norway claims the boys tell him there's only school in the winter because the teacher has to work in the fields in the summer. That may be true but even so there's a school everywhere even in remote and sparsely populated places like the island of Torgen.

There's also a lot of talk about vocational schools. They seem to be the most obvious solution for the children of craftsmen and labourers wherever schooling became mandatory. What master craftsmen used to provide in their workshops when they hired apprentices, schools are taking over. The woodcarvers of Oberammergaues in Austria are a *fait divers.* But it's a good example. It reinforces the view about those considering the dissemination of general knowledge dangerous and for whom teaching children a trade is just as important as learning to read and write. One can of course question whether focusing all attention on one specific training is a good or a bad thing. Furthermore, Jeanne is quite annoyed by the way the Hague magazine *Het Vaderland* deals with certain topics, and she's not alone in this. Lodewijk and their two Ostend friends also agree with the vision that greater unity should be achieved between Flanders and the Netherlands regarding language and spelling. This would, among other things, increase the availability of interchangeable books and likely have an impact on local education. But their

annoyance is the way is spoken about the noble poor displaying such greatness of character without wealth.

Living without wealth is one thing Jeanne says, but living in absolutely inhumane conditions is another, and she reinforces: “If the rich do not immediately decide to become poor too when they read that all the poor are such a paragon of sublimity because of their poverty, you can only conclude that a false picture is being painted here.”

Lodewijk laughs and says that in theory it should indeed be easier for a rich man to choose to become poor than for a poor wretch to become rich. Jeanne then quotes a text concerning Walter Scott writer of *Ivanhoe*: ‘*One of the purest and noblest characters the author of this book has ever known was a day labourer in one of the northern counties, who raised his children on a weekly income that never exceeded six guilders. He was a man full of wisdom and reason, although the education he received had never gone beyond the rudiments.*’

Lodewijk and Edward understand Jeanne's frustration at these words, but they add that this is an interpretation of who in writes in *Het Vaderland*. After all the same paper cites Richter, Herbert, and Bacon to outline the role of the family and the nurse. Richter is told to have said that ‘*a mariner who makes a voyage around the world absorbs less from all the people with whom he comes into contact than he has learned from his nurse.*’ The newspaper discusses the educational value of example as opposed to prescription. Therefore, the text mentions Herbert, who says that a good mother is worth more than a hundred schoolmasters. This, in turn, argues for the place of women: the home, which she must watch over and govern. Linking the need for a good upbringing to keep women at home is not only hypocrisy, according to Jeanne, but also false. And again she refers to the way the church views education and upbringing as a unity, while it is well known that knowledge comes from guiding by well-formed people and that this guiding is a completely

different supplement to moral education. Lodewijk responds that even those who hold this view of unity should appreciate that women also receive a solid scientific guiding to help their children grow up in knowledge. Edward, who calls himself a devout Catholic, notes that the conservative church authorities disagree. They want unity, but unity in ignorance. Jeanne thinks it's more a matter of a tiered hierarchy: conservative government over men, men over women, women over children. That's also the reason, she says, why hierarchy finds the whole idea of *active school* so despicable.

On the train to Tienen and Liège, Jeanne tells Lodewijk about the Keizerskaai Schoolhouse and how it came to an end due to the troubles between 1815 and 1830. Lodewijk notes that wars and other armed conflicts often spell the end of interesting human projects based on dialogue. They then briefly return to their conversations with Edward and Maria. When Edward mentioned Father Pype, Jeanne at one point thought the man was a sort of Ostend version of the Aalst Daens of the Christian People's Party. Lodewijk believes he certainly agrees with Daens on matters of compulsory school attendance, the right to education, working hours, and working conditions. But the fishing industry is not the factory, and shipowners are not necessarily factory bosses. Moreover, he got the impression that Pype provides his own solutions, both with the fishing school taught by the *Brothers of Charity* and for the girls' school with the *Sisters of Saint Vincent*. Jeanne says she would like to see at work the group *Kunst Genegen (Art Inclined)* that is also accompanied by him. And in the guild *'t Zal wel gaan* (*It will be alright)*she sees a kind of equivalent with the SEO of local functionaries.

Meanwhile, the two young people know little more about Father Daens than that he is still at odds with the Bishop of Ghent and that he has now been dismissed from his priestly office by Bishop

Stillemans.
Lodewijk then asks about the situation in Wallonia regarding trade unions and socialist activities. Jeanne explains that since the Quaregnon Congress, you've really have a *Belgian Workers' Party* that this was the result of the initiatives of many local socialist-organised mutual benefit societies and cooperatives. These were supported by César Depaepe and subsequently by Émile Vandervelde and could count on the mobilising power inherent in the trade unions. Jeanne explains that the general strike of 1893, which resulted also in the replacement of the census tax system with universal male plural suffrage, improved the workers' mobilisation capacity in Wallonia.
Finally, they also briefly discuss the expedition of the research vessel *Belgica* that under the leadership of Gerlache de Gomery, successfully overwintered in Antarctica for the first time.

And so dawns the last year of the nineteenth century, the first of the hectoyear 119.
In British schools, awarding prizes to students who have not been absent from school or who have performed well is now common practice. This allows schools to personalise certain achievements, in addition to the certificates awarded to everyone after completing a program. The prizes consist primarily of books. These awards ceremonies quickly become commercial enterprises. Many publishers have a specific catalog for prize books with special conditions. But other details are also being considered. For example, there are now series of prize books specifically for girls' schools, with half the authors being women. Apparently, boys don't need to read female authors.
Abolishing corporal punishment is more difficult in the Catholic south than in the Protestant north of Europe. In a society still marked by penance, there seems to be less resistance from the general population to corporal punishment, even when it simply

involves punishing disobedience. But there are also those who oppose it on behalf of the children. In Portugal, the author and politician Abílio Guerra Junqueiro is one such person. He reacts strongly to the “punishment board” (which means "slapping the hands"), euphemistically called in Portuguese ‘*menina de cinco olhos (the ‘Five-Eyed Girl’*), or Santa Luzia after the legend of the martyrdom of Luzia of Syracuse. He writes against the school of Santa Luzia of the Five Eyes and calls for a school with new teaching methods that eradicate institutionalised violence. Three stanzas of his poem *The Portuguese school* leave us in no doubt about his dissatisfaction with the prevailing model:

See the red children
In their horrible prison:
Golden swarms of bees!
The schoolmaster is the drone.

***

The use of the hard penalty boards
Crush and break
The children, the pearls
In the school, the mortar

***

These schools!... what indecency
These schools, what a farce!
They are butchers of innocence,
They are butchers of angels, period.

Almost everywhere, not just reading methods are a subject of dispute. Writing methods are also a subject of debate, both in Germany and the Netherlands. Just as standard words simplify simultaneous analysis and synthesis in learning to read, steeped script represents a significant simplification in learning to write. Using exercise books with examples prevents children from constantly having to copy from the board to the notebook, while also tracing all the letter connections. But this is apparently

impossible for those who, perhaps for historical reasons, insist on cursive writing in manuscripts. So, manuscripts with letter connections are quickly resorted to, and then the exercise book is suddenly also out of the question. The teachers provide examples of the script they are most proficient in, and then the writing is tailored so that everyone writes with the same rhythm. The Welker method even has names for each letter element, and reciting them mechanically while writing would promote correct letter formation.
In Belgium, only 15% of children complete a full primary schooling, about a third stay in school for four years, and one in two children attends for less than four years. General primary education exists only on paper, and secondary education in any form is even less common.
In the Netherlands, the anticlerical stance of liberals regarding special education is gradually declining. Liberals believe that these special schools could perhaps become less special and be eligible for a government subsidy.
Meanwhile, the paternalistic Catholic bourgeoisie is finding an alternative to traditional Sunday schools, where enrolment continues to decline. In many places, patronages are emerging, offering games and recreation that appeal to children and young people of their age. There are indoor and outdoor games, excursions, and theater, dance, gymnastics, singing, and brass band groups. Not only religious and moral education is provided, but also classes for those who want to gain more knowledge. These classes are held in the evenings during the working week. In social education, the interests of the wealthy bourgeoisie are clearly evident: this education serves to prepare young people to assume their role as adult and socially responsible workers. Savings, health, and pension funds, as well as temperance societies, are primarily funded by workers' wages.

In Oostende shortly before the summer season international train

schedules are adjusted once again. This will primarily benefit connections to Vienna and Konstanz, but also to Constantinople and even closer destinations. This applies to the World's Fair in Paris where this year the iron tower named after engineer Gustav Eiffel is reopened to the public. The current exhibition brings the tower back into the spotlight, as it remains the tallest man-made structure in the world. A human zoo will be on display during this exhibition *Acclimatisation Garden.* And this despite the increasingly frequent discussions about whether or not to depict people from other regions and portray them as dangerous savages, behind bars or in locked rooms. The Spanish Pavilion features a painting by 19-year-old Pablo Picasso, living in Paris at the time. He shares hosting with his friend Casagemas in a rented house in Montmartre and is very interested in the work of Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Pierre Bonnard, Vincent van Gogh, and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec.

Throughout the year, Jeanne and Lodewijk meet several times. During the summer, Jeanne also takes her brother Jean to Oostende. Edward and Maria do not own much, but they do find a bed at their home. Lodewijk also spent two days in Oostende, on his way to Cambridge, where he will spend another few months. Just before boarding the ship, he asks Jeanne to engage to him, which she accepts. In December, they personally announce to the family their intention to usher the coming century with their marriage.

A month and a half later, Lodewijk moves to Liège, where Jeanne works as a teacher. He got a job teaching English and Dutch at the local high school.
From their Genevan friends they hear that in Switzerland the special *Verding*-market has now been abolished. Until last year, orphans and other children considered without rights were offered or raffled off to interested parties at that market. Although the market has been abolished, the practice continues unabated, so that many of those *Verding*-children are still forced to labour.

Frederick reads that teacher training colleges are gradually becoming more established in Portugal, but that many teachers still obtain their diplomas after a qualifying exam without any prior special pedagogical studies. In Portugal itself, opinions on this are very divided, and defenders of teacher training colleges generally view the qualifying exam as a scandal. For a population of five and a half million, there are just under 6,000 teachers, and only a quarter of the population over the age of seven can read. That's about the lowest figure in Europe.

Jeanne's mother's anarchist friends speak of freethinker Francisco Ferrer, also known to César Depaepe and who spent some time in exile in Paris. He subsequently traveled throughout Europe with his second wife, Léopoldine Bonnard, freethinker and teacher. They established contacts with numerous freethinkers and anarch-syndicalists, including Jean Jaurès. Ferrer also developed an interest in Esperanto. With an inheritance of one million French francs from a wealthy former student, he created his own school in Barcelona with the name *Modern School.*

In the following years, Lodewijk and Jeanne show great interest in the Barcelona school and its rationalist pedagogy. However, they immediately identify its biggest drawback. The school requires students to pay, which makes it inaccessible to everyone. While there is a rule that parents pay according to their means, the barrier remains.

Great Britain, where Queen Victoria was succeeded by her son Edward at the beginning of this year, is taking stock of the consequences of the thirty-year-old *Education Act.* Marxists believe that the class society that consolidated in Great Britain during Victoria's long reign is difficult to change through education. Even if upward mobility exists for some, it is quickly hindered for others, primarily by those who have elevated themselves in society. But the changes that schooling can bring about can also be viewed differently. Schooling gives more people the opportunity to acquire

knowledge not to imitate others, but to forge a new path among themselves. Samuel Smiles often talks about how a structure can guide people to help themselves, and an educational system fits into this if it is not seen simply as a system to allow the established power to maintain that power, which is often the case. This is what freethinkers, trade unionists, and cooperating individuals who establish mutual benefit societies argue. One could look at the public system of the last twenty years through this lens to see what it ultimately achieved: the upper class with new members, a new upper class, or better general knowledge resulting in stronger mutual societies and cooperatives.

Jeanne looks up some texts by Samuel Smiles and asks her mother's friends about publications by Francisco Ferrer about his Modern School.

In a local pedagogical magazine, Lodewijk reads an interesting comment by a certain teacher named Bigot, who, according to Lodewijk, gives a push toward *mathetics* and its understanding. The comment has less to do with the *art of learning* than with the role of certain female teachers, whom some would rather not have in the classroom. The man says: '*First of all, everyone has experienced the foolish notion that most female city teachers, who often come from higher circles than the teachers themselves, have of the home life of their students. And that's a shame, because an important means of understanding children and grasping their ideas is precisely to know the spiritual atmosphere in which they live.*' Lodewijk believes this is a good starting point to advocate for teacher training that would encourage future teachers to reflect on their own learning process and develop the ability to empathise with the lives of others.

Lodewijk and Jeanne both read with great interest about a Brussels initiative for children who supposedly need a special form of education. A school for mentally "difficult" boys has existed there for four years. The school now has over three hundred boys. However, the couple believes the goal here is simultaneous

education as well, since the school divides the children into what they call homogeneous groups, which can mean groups of passive or undisciplined children. Essentially, the lesson schedule is adapted to these groups. Yet another didactic approach.

But they also read about the doctor Ovide Decroly, which interests them much more. He has just responded to the request of the *Maatschappij voor Kindergeneeskunde (Society for Pediatrics)* to become head physician of a clinic-laboratory for abnormal children. Decroly writes about this that he accepts on two conditions: we are talking about *irregular* children to avoid the words *abnormal* or *disabled*. Furthermore, the clinic will be opened in his own home, because he wants to be able to observe the children in their daily lives. The initiative will be called '*Instituut voor speciaal onderwijs voor kinderen van beide geslachten (Institute for special education for children of both sexes)*. The children live freely and are educated alongside the three children of Decroly himself. The doctor stays all day with the children, and every evening reviews the day's events with his staff. He claims to learn to work more and better this way, strengthening his pedagogical principles and reflexes. According to Lodewijk, this is a fine example of mathetics.

During a visit to Johanna in Kelmis, Lodewijk meets doctor Wilhelm Molly thanks to his father-in-law. At one point, the conversation turns to the international language of Dr. Esperanto now also known by his own name, Lejzer Zamenhof. Wilhelm shows several copies of the magazine *Lingvo Internacia* and Lodewijk is immediately as enthusiastic as Frederick. He sees great possibilities, including a new *Janua Linguarum* or *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* for all primary and secondary schools in all countries that want to participate.

Later, Annie and Johanna discuss Annie Cannon. She has just published a star catalog she prepared with a group of women. Along with Henrietta Swan Leavitt, Antonia Maury, and Florence Cushman among others, Annie Cannon spends a lot of time at the

observatory. Because of this, they are heavily criticised for *'not being in their place'* and should go through life as housewives. Furthermore, it is said, they should not forget they are only assistants. But their work is greatly appreciated. Annie Cannon and Henrietta Leavitt are both deaf, which they consider an advantage when classifying stars according to their relative brightness. They are less distracted by background noise while examining photographic plates. That work is often tedious, but Annie demonstrates enormous patience. This even makes her popular among the men at the observatory. And now, with this catalog, it is whispered here and there she might open doors to a real academic career after all. Jeanne notes that this is a good opportunity to expand Decroly's idea about *irregular* children into the world of adults and to also consider people who are blind or deaf or simply different from how other people use the five senses.

Dear friends,

It's indeed been a long time since we didn't say anything. We're very busy in Liège and are also regularly in Kelmis. But even that is not an excuse for being silent for almost a year.

Lodewijk gets along well with my father, I would even say a little too well when it comes to free Moresnet, the international solidarity between workers and intellectuals and that new international language the nowadays known as Esperanto *where you, Edward, are also interested in.*

We don't know much more than you do about what's going on in Congo Free State. Lodewijk merely remarked sarcastically that Free State usually refers to a territory that isn't free at all. Free Moresnet doesn't have a democracy, not even for the election of the mayor of Kelmis, and Congo Free State, as far as we know, is a territory overseen by Leopold II as absolute monarch. We hear the same stories over and over again about the rubber harvests and how the local population is forced to labour for them. You tell us that the Court apparently has funding for large-scale projects, and that naturally raises fears for the worst.

Moresnet now relies mainly on the processing of zinc-bearing ores. Many

people are still employed in the factory, and Grandmother Johanna told us that this year the Société Vieille-Montagne school employs two teachers and three unqualified female teachers, who together teach 500 children. A mix of simultaneous and mutual teaching is certainly in place. Meanwhile, it's far from certain that the regulations currently being developed in Belgium regarding occupational accidents in mines and factories will also be implemented in Vieille-Montagne.

Over in your North Sea neighbours the Conservatives and the Church of England have apparently won their battle over schools. If I'm not mistaken, local school boards are abolished by the Balfour Act*, and that makes the district commissioners supreme over everything concerning secondary schools. You'll see that there will be even fewer working-class children in them than there are today. For anyone who advocates a broad expansion of secondary schools and wants to see schools other than just Anglican or Catholic, this new Education Act is a slap in the face, isn't it? Naturally, our concern is not only for the children of the upper classes, but also, and especially, for the children of working-class people, even with all our doubts about the underlying intentions of the reformers who advocate a fast track to secondary education. A fast track for whom and where, in concrete terms?*

Something completely different now. I don't know if you've ever heard of Walthère Victor Spring, who works here at the University of Liège. Years ago, he warned about the dangers of carbon dioxide from coal combustion in industrial areas around Liège. A few months ago, my father ran into him, and he was quite enthusiastic about the research of a Swedish colleague of his, Svante Arrhenius. He was supposedly linking human activity to natural fluctuations in Earth's albedo, which could cause global warming to unsustainable temperatures. It's strange how scientists can be so enthusiastic about their unanimity in predicting disasters…but anyway. Recently, a report circulated at the university about an article in a local American newspaper that read as follows:

> *'Hint to coal consumers. A Swedish professor, Svend Arrhenius, has evolved a new theory of the extinction of the human race. He holds that the combustion of coal by civilised man is gradually warming the atmosphere so that in the cours of a few cycles of 10.000 years the earth will be baked in a temperature close to the*

boiling point. He bases his theory on the accumulation of carbonic acid in the atmosphere, which acts as a glass in concentrating and refracting the heat of the sun!'

Have you followed any other children's literature? I was told, that Frances Hodgson Burnett features children and children's memoirs in several of her works. And do you know if there are any French translations of Mark Twain's books, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn?

Of course, I also always look for books that have women as main characters, especially after I read Les Quatre Filles du docteur March. Luisa Ascott's work, as others, share her ideas about the role of women in society and the abolition of slavery. Through my father, I met Isabelle Gatti, who retired and left the management of her school to others. She is now active in the Belgian Workers' Party. She says she has long been a feminist and has also been a socialist for a while. The last time we spoke, she recommended more reading featuring women. She herself is disappointed and also somewhat angry with her male party members who ultimately failed to include women in the proposals for universal single suffrage, arguing that this would favour clerical parties given the influence of the clergy on women. It's strange how the fear of losing power benefits those who already hold and maintain power.

Dear friends, Lodewijk and I would very much like to accept your invitation to come to Ostend early next year. We're considering the Carnival season, if that's convenient for you.

Very warm regards, yours Jeanne and Lodewijk.

Jeanne and Lodewijk arrive in Oostende on Friday, February 20th. They will stay with their friends until a few days after Carnival, intending to travel to Tienen early March. It's a surprise for Edward and Maria to see Jeanne heavily pregnant. That's actually why Lodewijk and Jeanne will travel to Tienen after Oostende. They want their first child to be born there, in the relative peace of Lodewijk's family farm. No one could have imagined that this would be the last time they would see each other, although Jeanne would continue to correspond with Edward

Peeters throughout her life.

On the Saturday before Carnival, Jeanne accompanies Edward to visit his class, which is decidedly unusual. She'll be talking to the children about the life of miners in Wallonia, while Edward's class is supposed to tell her about the life of fishermen and the fish market. During this conversation, ten-year-old Lucien Souris mentions his father's work as an engineer at John Bauwens. Jeanne explains that there's a big difference between working as an engineer in the mines or on a train and on a steam trawler. On a ship, the engineer can't easily rely on others, so he has to be more prepared if something goes wrong with the machine. Lucien then replies that this is exactly what his father always says.

After class, Edward says that things must have been different for his colleagues fifty years ago than they are today in primary school. Today, nine out of ten children go to school without having to pay. A good fifty years ago, that was less than one in two. In practice, Jeanne notes, this means that, all things considered, school is now open to almost everyone. But distorted images are being spread around the world. Although the speech from the throne, almost thirty years ago, stated that '*The intellectual culture of a people is more than ever, in the present time, the essential source of its prosperity*' it has been forgotten to add that a general greater intellectual culture does not mean material improvement for everyone. No, the incomes of manual workers both in factories and in crafts make many think that more knowledge in order to be better paid is a kind of '*soif de parvenir*' is only possible through a '*poussée vers le fonctionnarisme*'. Yet that's not entirely true. For many craft and industrial activities, and even in agriculture, workers today need more technical knowledge. This, in turn, Jeanne believes, means that schools once more do not provide long general instruction, but rather focus to quickly on vocational knowledge. Thus, the stratified population is also more quickly fostered by the schools. Comenius' three times six years has never been taken seriously. Those with

power don't want it, those with money don't want to pay for it. It's that simple. Edward laughs and says that he once read in an old pedagogical magazine: '*From now on, agriculture and industry will breathe only knowledge and science, and the village teacher should not forget this!'* It seems like a confirmation of Jeanne's words.

Edward talks about the Van Lummel plates hanging in his classroom. He adds that he agrees with Ligthart when he notes that these plates provide a good overview of nature in all its aspects and also help to show connections between both living and inanimate creatures.

Jeanne agrees that they are certainly helpful whenever you can't go into nature with the children for direct observation. She explains that the *Bedales School* is currently recreating several old barns on its grounds. "Like life-size paintings of agricultural history," she jokes. It's certainly good to know that preparatory education consistently adheres to Fröbel's guidelines, while the initiators claim to be interested in the medical, pedagogical, and philosophical ideas of the Italian Maria Montessori. They are therefore trying to create a family-like environment so that children of different ages can work together in groups. The newfangled option of simultaneous education is rejected. According to Jeanne, this is rightly so, because this is a purely economic and certainly not a pedagogical solution to compulsory schooling.

During one of the dinners, which are as always strictly vegetarian at Edward and Maria's, they briefly discuss how teachers organize themselves today. Of course, the pedagogical journals remain important tools for exchanging ideas. Edward says he himself is also considering a better organisational structure to strengthen the bond between peers who share the *active class* as a model. There are of course the more national associations, such as the *Leagues* and *Tot 't Nut* which unites teachers within certain national borders. But they often have no mathetical concerns. It can involve mutual assistance, as is the case, for example, with the *Mutual Aid Association of*

Portuguese Primary Teachers which was founded in Coimbra in 1897.

As foreseen Louis and Jeanne travel from Oostende to Tienen after Carnival. They were allowed to use rooms in Lodewijks' family's large farmhouse. In early April, their son was born, whom they named Louis, apparently a kind of Louis tradition not only upheld by kings. A few weeks earlier, Charlotte Hofstadter is born in Dendermonde, barely ten years younger than the Lucien Souris she will meet later.
While Lodewijk and Jeanne are still in Tienen, they receive a letter from a very indignant Frederick, who mentions that Belgian and Prussian law enforcement officials have illegally violated Moresnet's neutrality. Through some correspondence, Jeanne and Lodewijk learn that both the Belgian and Prussian governments were displeased with the ever-expanding gambling and the associated transit of wealthy gamblers of questionable character. These individuals took advantage of Moresnet's neutrality to play roulette and stay overnight at the Hotel Bergershoff, which gradually developed into a clandestine casino. Moresnet must not become a second Monaco, and so those who wanted to keep Moresnet independent were looking for other financing options, while Prussia, in particular, was increasingly pushing for the termination of the non-country due to inaccurate border measurements and private interests in zinc spar mining almost a century ago.

Johanna Lemaître doesn't seem particularly bothered by the political turmoil. At 86, she still lives on her farm. She writes to her son and granddaughter that she's compiling a sort of overview of who she calls pedagogues and what their generations have had contact with, or heard of. From this, she summarises a brief description of all the figures she believes could establish a kind of proto-association among those who want to reduce ignorance by making schools more attractive. She believes it will gradually become easier to distinguish between those who are simply seeking

more efficient working models and methods for simultaneous learning and those who are focused on models based on tolerance, cooperation, and common understanding, where more efficient working methods serve only to better teach children the art of learning.

In the short overview she gives Jeanne, she has arranged the figures she selected by age. All are active in this year, 1903, except for the first one on the list.

João de Deus (died in 1896 at the age of 65)

In Portugal João de Deus' phonics reading method has gradually become popular among liberals who want to combat illiteracy. His method was mandatory for almost twenty years and became optional again this year.

Although the method produces good results, more conservative and less educated teachers criticise it. They prefer purely synthetic methods out of arrogance, ignorance, or both. And yet, the method can't even be compared to the global word methods in our region. There's no real prior analysis linked to the synthesis that makes the phonics and word lists possible.

Cecil Reddie, 45 years.

Cecil Reddie is from Scotland. He worked as an educator at Fettes College in Edinburgh before studying chemistry and medicine to become an educator. In 1885, he was a science teacher at Fettes. Because of his ideas about sex education, he left Fettes College for Clifton College in Bristol in 1887. Edward Carpenter's influence led him to found Abbotsholme School, which you attended, in 1889. As you've already learned, he was quite conflicted, resulting in many of the teachers who worked with him leaving quickly. Conflicts also quickly arose among the founders, leaving Reddie as the sole leader of the school.

Because of Reddie's strong personality, conflicts keep recurring. At Abbotsholme, domestic and international professors follow one

another. They discover Reddie's practice, and many subsequently establish their own schools, as did John Badley in Steep.

Jan Ligthart, 44 years old.
Jan is an inspiration to your friend Edward Peeters. In Schilderswijk, The Hague, he established the practice of discussing every curriculum with his teachers. In the Association of Dutch Teachers, he defends the independence of teaching staff. He has also taught adults. According to him, the school initiatives he supports, such as the Hague School Association and the Humanitarian School in Laren, share the same philosophy, which Edward summarises as follows:

- *Educator must also educate themselves. Child education begins with adults learning from their own mistakes:*
- *Provide the child with physical activity, independent exploration and questioning and allow it to fulfil its task in its own way:*
- *Do everything within the community-established rules that everyone must adhere to;*
- *Every child has their own unique personality and needs. There are general rules, but within these, everyone should be able to be themselves.*

John Dewey (44 years old)
Since 1894, Dewey has been working on his model of rational empiricism associated with pragmatic philosophy at the University of Chicago. He published Thought and its Subject-Matter. *Dewey supervises the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, which he founded himself. Here he can further develop his pedagogical convictions. Meanwhile, he collected enough data in those Laboratory Schools to write a paper four years ago and publish* The School and Society.
For several years now he has lived on the East Coast and is president-elect of the American Psychological Association.

Francisco Ferrer (44 years old)

Ferrer's republican ideas led him to live in exile in France for a time. He accepted to be a companion to the staunch Catholic Ernestine Meunier and, together with her, had long conversations not only about faith and how the conservative Catholic clergy in Spain abused it to manipulate people, but also about how children should be raised. He also became a staunch advocate of co-education for boys and girls, a subject practically taboo in Spain. Two years ago, he returned to Spain and founded a rationalist teaching school there, which quickly became known as the Modern School, after receiving funding from Ernestine Meunier.

To this end, he rents and furnishes a former monastery in Barcelona. His plan quickly takes shape. But life isn't easy in this country, heavily influenced by a conservative Catholic Church that holds a monopoly on education. In just a few weeks, Francisco Ferrer expands his contacts in intellectual circles and within the labor movement. In doing so, he thwarts the civil and religious authorities, overcomes all administrative obstacles, assembles a team of dedicated staff, and launches his school.

The Escuela Moderna opened its doors on October 8, 1901. There were 12 girls and 18 boys at the time. By December, there were already 70, and by January, 86. Today, the Modern School is supported by 120 circles and associations, and rationalist educational centers are springing up all over the country, which is frowned upon by the clergy and conservative circles.

Francisco Ferrer summarises his project as follows: 'I am establishing new schools in which principles will be immediately applied that correspond to the ideal of a community in which the conventions, prejudices, cruelties, deceit, and lies upon which modern society is based are rejected.' *Regarding his pedagogical approach he says:* 'We avoid dogmas or habits, because these are precisely what imprison mental vitality. We promote only solutions demonstrated by facts, theories validated by reason, and truths confirmed by

specific proofs. The goal of our education is to transform the individual's mind into an instrument of their will. We want the truths of science to shine with their own brilliance and illuminate every intelligence, so that, when put into practice, they can bring happiness to humanity, without excluding anyone through odious privilege.'

Maria Montessori (33 years old)

In the years leading up to the turn of the century, Doctor Maria Montessori increasingly advocated for the establishment of special classes and institutions for children with learning disabilities, as well as for teacher training for their instructors. She spoke about this at the First Pedagogical Conference in Turin. She gave lectures at the Roman school for teacher training on behalf of the newly founded National League for the Protection of Retarded Children *on special educational methods for children with intellectual disabilities. She joined the board of the National League.*

In 1900, the Legga Nazionale opened the Scuola Magistrale Ortofrenica, a medical-pedagogical institute aimed at training teachers to work with children with learning difficulties. Montessori was appointed co-director. In the following years, Maria Montessori developed methods and materials.

The school was an immediate success. The children in the model classroom come from asylum and regular schools, and until now, were considered "uneducable" due to their shortcomings.

Today, Maria Montessori studies philosophy, anthropology, and educational science, among other things. Recently, and especially after reading Eduard Séguin and Jean Itard's work on the Aveyron nature child, she says she's considering adapting her methods for educating children with learning disabilities to mainstream education. The two articles she's published this year are worth reading.

Paul Geheeb (33 years old)

*I became interested in Paul after reading an article by the young student Paul Freimut, who I later discovered was the pseudonym of the outspoken Paul Geheeb. In his article, he discusses, among other things, the stupidity of the duels and the excessive alcohol consumption in what he considered the empty camaraderie of the fraternities, as well as the scandalous attitude of the young university students toward women. For example, look at the passage where he says: "*The German sons of the Muses consider women the most wretched and unhappy being. They describe the female sex as purely passive and maintain that women have no higher calling than to satisfy man's carnal desires and serve as a machine for human reproduction.' *After facing criticism from his examiners regarding his liberal stance on the healing of the blind man by Christ, he abandoned his theological studies and four years ago took his teaching exam. He had already been a teacher and educator for five years at the Johannes Trüper institution, where he counselled antisocial youth. He also worked with a young epileptic man, which introduced him to the doctors at the psychiatric hospital of the University of Jena.*

Apparently, it was also in Jena that Paul Geheeb learned about the New School of Abbotsholme from his friend Hermann Lietz, who apprenticed with Wilhelm Rein. He attended the rural boarding school that Lietz founded in Ilsenburg. Geheeb was reportedly invited to work there, but he chose to become a teacher at the sanatorium founded by Carl Gmelin. Today, he teaches at Lietz's second school, which opened two years ago in Haubinda, Thuringia.

Ovide Decroly (32 years old)

Closer to home, of course, we have Ovide Decroly, whom we already mentioned during our family conversations. He says that school should be seen as a microcosm where children learn to live in society. In preparation for a democratic attitude, everything at

school should happen as it does in everyday life.
Conflicts need to be examined, and that requires a willingness to listen, without alienating anyone. Ovide Decroly says he now starts from four principles:

- *The child learns globally. A comprehensive approach to an object should be permitted. Then, they can move on to particularisation and analysis.*
- *The child's interests guide the education provided.*
- *Children should be given the opportunity to let the natural environment inspire them to make discoveries.*
- *The classroom is a workshop, a laboratory, where the child lives and acts. But this classroom breaks through the walls of the school. It exists everywhere, in the kitchen, the studio, the shops, the street… This allows you to work from the concrete to the abstract.*

This is very reminiscent of what we read about the School House on Keizerskaai, but this is also what I tried to do in our Children's Republic Barn.

Eduard Claparède (30 years old)
Eduard is of interest to us for his studies of human development. He received his medical degree six years ago and turned to what is now more commonly called psychology. For the past two years, he has been involved with the journal Archives de Psychologie *which he started together with Théodore Flournoy.*

Edward Peeters (30 years old)
I'm grateful you introduced me to Edward's work. I realise he could play an important role in a genuine Flemish pedagogical movement that could spread the insights of the active school from Germany, England, and the Netherlands. I remember you telling me that Peeters remarked: 'As early as the end of 1897, I had been very surprised and irritated by the fact that there was no Flemish education of its own outside the standard teacher

training courses, and I had gradually taken to the idea of attempting what P. A. De Vos and Pol Anri had not been able to achieve..'

The Causerie Bibliographique *in the* Echo d'Ostende *and the* Causerie Pédagogique*, which he keeps in his personal library and showed to you, seem very useful to me for pedagogical innovation in public schools. It's certainly a good thing for you to stay in touch with Edward. I hear he considers both Max Nordau and Leo Tolstoy as his mentors. Try to find out more about the* Pure Life Movement *and the* Life reformers.

Jeanne Teacher (28 years old)

I have included you here on my list, dear child, because I am absolutely convinced that you yourself will also make a contribution to what Edward calls the Active Class *and what Francisco Ferrer calls the* Modern School.

František Bakule (27 years old)

I discovered Bakule while reading about Tolstoy's work. He said he was deeply impressed by his proposals when he read his work during his teacher training in Pftibram.

Maybe try to find out a little more about him.

Pierre Bovet (25 years old)

I heard about this young man, who had just received his doctorate in literature, through correspondents in Geneva. What particularly caught my attention was the Club of Young Friends of Nature (Amici Naturae), which he founded ten years ago with Albert Loosli.

Henryk Goldszmit (of Janusz Korczak) (25 years)

Henryk had to start working very early after his father was interned in the Tworki asylum in Pruszków in 1890. This depleted the family's financial resources, and by the age of 12, Henryk had to support his family. He became a preceptor and thus discovered pedagogy.

His grandmother and only confidante died when he was 14, and when in 1896 his father committed suicide, leaving the family completely destitute, the family was forced to leave the spacious apartment where it lived. After his father's death, Henryk had to work even harder and give private lessons to support his mother and sister.

Henryk wrote a novel entitled Suicide *and a humorous article* The Gordian Knot *(Weasel Gordyyski) which was published in a satirical weekly revue (Kolce: Thorns) at the Russian high school under the pseudonym Hen. He wanted to become a journalist at the time.*

In 1898 he began studying medicine at the University of Warsaw. That same year he directed the four-act drama Ktoredy? *[Where?] to Kurier Warszawski under the pseudonym Janusz Korczak, the aristocratic Polish name of a character in the novel by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski. The play receives an honourable mention. Meanwhile, Henryk joins the Association of Free Libraries, established for children and young workers.*

In 1899 he was in Switzerland and studied the work of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi.

Three years ago, Henryk and his friend Ludwik Licinski visited the poor neighbourhoods of Warsaw and the material and moral conditions of children's lives. In Nedza Warszawy *(Warchau and its misery), Henryk presents his observations and reflections. Two years ago now he described the misery of the poorest, abandoned, neglected or so-called depraved children and dedicated his book* Street children *to them.*

I suggest you contact him.

Adolphe Ferrière (24 years old)

You know him better than I do. As an academic, he will likely play a greater role in benefiting the active school if he continues his interest in initiatives like Abbotsholme, Bedales, and l'École des Roches. I hope his deafness won't prevent him from continuing his

research.

Antonio de Sena Faria Vasconcelos (23 January)
I heard about this young Portuguese from our friends at the New University of Brussels. He just presented a dissertation there, entitled La psychologie des foules infantiles *at the Laboratory of Sociology.*
When I asked more about him I heard that he wrote last year the book O Pessimismo (Semiology and therapy). *In it, he challenges what he calls individualistic ethics and advocates for a different ethical perspective that examines the connections between private interest and social interest, and between the individual and society. He aims to subordinate the improvement of the former to the improvement of the latter. In the year of its publication, he gave a conference at the Ateneu Comercial de Lisboa on '*The ethical and social doctrine of the crowd' *After this he wrote: '*Sadly, there is nothing in our country. The plague of illiteracy is plaguing the people.*' Perhaps, with your father's help, you can get in touch with the young man.*

Jeanne is happily going through her grandmother's notes. She's making plans to contact all those people and, who knows, maybe even meet them in person. It is still too early to know of any other contemporaries who could complete Johanna's list, let alone know about them.

In Scotland, Alexander Sutherland Neill is just 20. His father comes from a family of miners and is a teacher, like his mother is. They were not well-off, and there were difficulties in funding the eldest son, Willy, for university. When Alexander was 14, his father, seeing his lack of interest in studying, found him a job and subsequently hired him as an assistant. However, at the end of his apprenticeship, Alexander failed the entrance exam for the teacher training college. Nevertheless, he continued to teach at various institutions.

Beatrice Nina Frederica de Normann is now 18. She was born in Marseille and is the eldest child of Albert de Normann and Irene Matilda Wood. Because of her father's work in shipping, she spent her early years in Marseille and Genoa, hence her fluency in Italian and French. She was strongly influenced by theosophy. She will soon depart for England to complete her training as a home economics teacher, after which she will teach the subject at a university in Sheffield.

In the small southern French village of Gars, eight-year-old Célestin Freinet attends school. He is the second-to-last child of six. His father, Joseph Delphin Freinet, is a farmer, and his mother, Marie Victoire Torcat, runs the village grocery store. Célestin alternates between attending school and herding animals.

In Neuchâtel, Jean Piaget is enrolled in primary school.

In the Netherlands, the global word method with a reading chart is now published by J.B. Wolters. The teaching materials have been thoroughly revised by Jan Ligthart and Riek Scheepstra, also teachers. Together with Matheus Hoogeveen, they have rewritten the accompanying reading booklets. This reading chart with the words *aap, noot, mies, wim, zus, jet, teun, vuur, gijs, lam, kees, bok, weide, does, hok, duif, schapen (monkey, nut, mies, wim, sister, jet, teun, fire, gijs, lamb, kees, goat, meadow, does, cage, pigeon, sheep)* will ultimately be in use in Dutch-speaking language areas for almost a century.

Stories continue to emerge from Congo about the despotic treatment of the local population for the enrichment of the Court of Leopold II.

In Moresnet, if independence proves impossible, they are trying to maintain neutrality, despite the silent opposition of the mayor, who is of German descent. Discussions are underway about organising a centennial celebration for Free Moresnet.

In Belgium, Walloon industry is booming, thanks to the railways. They manufacture locomotives that are delivered almost anywhere

in the world. The state is seeking to acquire all railway concessions. This is currently the case for 4,000 km of Belgian Railways, the largest employer in Belgium with around 80,000 employees.

The European courts and states are causing considerable unrest around the world due to the ongoing skirmishes over colonies, despite conferences of Berlin and Brussels. In Europe, socialists and pacifists continue to advocate for an international working-class coalition, which Esperanto speakers eagerly join.

And so the year 1903 turns into the year 1904.

End of book 06

A strange letter

Dear Pascal

We are taking advantage of small glitches in the space-time continuum to allow you to become a saga of educators, pedagogues, and anthropogogues. The saga was first published in 122.15 (Holocene calendar), which corresponds to the year 2215 according to the calendar you use in the 21st century.

The dynasty spans 20 generations, from 1630 to 2222 in your era.
When we studied your century in preparation for the work, we found your name and your interest in dialogical learning. That is why we kindly ask you to further disseminate the documents we send whenever we get the chance.

You can rest assured. The glitch in the continuum will have no impact on the past or future of living people. Only documents can be sent through it.

On behalf of the team of writers,

Maria Liber